

GANT- TON & CO

BY ARTHUR J. EDDY

PS
1567
E 69 G 2

CORNELL
UNIVERSITY
LIBRARY



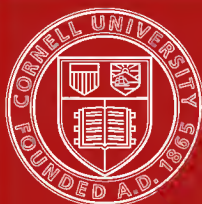
BOUGHT WITH THE INCOME
OF THE SAGE ENDOWMENT
FUND GIVEN IN 1891 BY
HENRY WILLIAMS SAGE

Cornell University Library
PS 1567.E69G2

Ganton & Co. : a story of Chicago commerc



3 1924 021 992 312



Cornell University Library

The original of this book is in
the Cornell University Library.

There are no known copyright restrictions in
the United States on the use of the text.

GANTON & CO.



Ganton swung around and said sharply,— “ Why did n’t we make a better showing last month, Browning?” [Page 12]

GANTON & CO.

A Story of Chicago Commercial and Social Life

BY

ARTHUR JEROME EDDY

*Author of "Tales of a Small Town," "Recollections
and Impressions of Whistler," etc.*

ILLUSTRATED BY THOMAS FOGARTY



CHICAGO

A. C. McCLURG & CO.

1908

MB

e



COPYRIGHT
A. C. McCLURG & CO.
1908

Published September 26, 1908
Entered at Stationers' Hall, London, England

All Rights Reserved.

66365-B
73
S

The Lakeside Press
R. R. DONNELLEY & SONS COMPANY
CHICAGO

CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
I. THE OFFICE ON LA SALLE STREET . . .	9
II. GALA-NIGHT AT THE PARK CLUB . . .	30
III. NOTORIETY	42
IV. JOHN GANTON, JR.	49
V. A WIRELESS MESSAGE	56
VI. THE GREAT STRIKE	71
VII. NOT A CENT FOR TRIBUTE	81
VIII. A DINNER AT THE GOLF CLUB	92
IX. A DAUGHTER OF JEM KEATING	119
X. ONE SUNDAY AFTERNOON	135
XI. A GLASS OF WINE	165
XII. AN ANONYMOUS LETTER	186
XIII. EFFORTS TOWARD COMPROMISE	204
XIV. THE WORK OF THUGS	219
XV. END OF THE STRIKE	235
XVI. BLOOD WILL TELL	257
XVII. JOHN GANTON'S REMORSE	284
XVIII. FATHER AND SON	303
XIX. MRS. JACK'S DINNER	319
XX. A STRAIGHT TIP	331
XXI. DELANEY'S LAST PLAY	354

CONTENTS—CONTINUED

XXII.	OUT OF THE YARDS	374
XXIII.	THE SENTENCE OF DEATH	384
XXIV.	JOHN GANTON'S VISION	396
XXV.	THE END AND THE BEGINNING	408

ILLUSTRATIONS

	PAGE
Ganton swung around and said sharply,—“Why did n’t we make a better showing last month, Browning ?”	<i>Frontispiece</i>
It was the regular gala-night at the Park Club, and, as usual, Mrs. Jack had secured her favorite corner	34
Allan walked slowly along the dimly lighted street, his hands in his pockets and his eyes on the side- walk, thinking	232
“You remember what I said to you,” his father repeated in harsher tones. “If you marry that girl I’ll cut you off without a penny!” . . .	316
“Not much,” Will exclaimed jubilantly, “I’ll hang on until it touches —”	358

GANTON & CO.

CHAPTER I

THE OFFICE ON LA SALLE STREET

THE day was hot, very hot for June; a strong southwest wind swept clouds of dust along the dirty street and through the open windows of the high buildings on each side.

John Ganton sat with coat off and vest unbuttoned in his La Salle Street office, mopping sweat from his forehead as he pored over the balance-sheets showing the profits of his great company for the previous month,—*his* company, because he owned practically the entire capital stock. The outstanding minority interest was held by his son Will, a few heads of departments, and the managers of branches, upon conditions which gave him the right to purchase at a fixed price if the holder ever wished to sell, or should leave his employ, or die,—conditions which bound his men to him without permitting them to exercise any real ownership over their stock. Furthermore, the company was his because he had made it; his brains, his industry, his genius, had built it up from a small beginning to the greatest concern of the kind in the world. The papers before him showed that at the “Yards” in Chicago, and in his plants in different cities, he frequently killed more than twelve thousand cattle, about the same number of sheep, and thrice as many hogs every twenty-

Ganton & Co.

four hours,—over sixty thousand animals a day. For the benefit of visitors to the cattle-killing room, a great sign read—

CAPACITY—1200 CATTLE PER HOUR

Yet it was the aim of John Ganton's life to double the output of his company, to make it greater than that of all other packing companies taken together, to extend his control over the slaughtering and packing industry until the world depended upon him for meat.

In every city of any importance he had established his agencies, until the sign "GANTON & Co." was almost as familiar in Hong Kong as in Omaha. He owned his own cars and his own ships, and each carried conspicuously the blazing sign, "GANTON & Co." His name meant more to the millions who ate his foods and consumed his products than that of any monarch.

An electric fan in one corner of the small room which served as his private office kept the hot air in circulation, and helped some, but not much, for the wind was stifling, and John Ganton felt the heat; felt it, as he frequently said, more than when he was younger and worked at the Yards. Besides, he was not satisfied with the business of the previous month as shown by the figures before him.

From time to time he shook the dust from the papers, and scrutinized first one sheet, then another, as if searching for the weak point. They had made only a little over four millions in May, an increase of only three hundred thousand over the same month of the year before; and it failed to satisfy him. For that matter, he seldom was satisfied with the showing made, demanding larger and larger returns, and

The Office on La Salle Street

by his indomitable will and tireless energy spurring his lieutenants on to greater efforts, until the force in every branch, from office-boy to manager, were moved by the feverish desire to outdo themselves and others; to make each month, each quarter, each year, better than the last. John Ganton's spirit moved not only those about him, but men in his employ in far countries, men he had never seen and who would never see him. If a man did not speedily become imbued with that spirit, the company had no use for him; if he was not ready to sacrifice his days and nights, his youth, his life, his home and family, to advance the interests of the company, he could go. Somehow, such was the power and influence of the iron-willed man at the head, that men fell unresistingly into his way of doing things and became his slaves; they followed him in his great fight for industrial supremacy as soldiers follow a successful general in a campaign of conquest.

As he put his short, stubby forefinger on one footing after another, the scowl on his face grew deeper, and he chewed away viciously at the end of the cigar in his mouth. He did not smoke, always said he could not afford it; but in his earlier days he had been an inveterate chewer, and while that habit had been partially conquered, it survived in the chewing of cigars he never lighted.

Coming to a report which was particularly unsatisfactory, he called to the boy who sat at the small desk just outside the door connecting with the main office,—

“Tell Browning to come here.”

He leaned back in his chair, mopped his red face, and looked out of the open window toward the big brick building opposite, where he could read on a long row of windows the

Ganton & Co.

signs of his chief competitor, and reading these did not improve his frame of mind.

Browning was manager of the home office; in reality he was John Ganton's right-hand man, at once his ablest and most abject slave. Ganton valued him without knowing how much he really depended upon him.

Browning entered and stood quietly beside the desk. His employer swung around and said sharply,—

"Why did n't we make a better showing last month, Browning?"

"All things considered, it seems to me we did pretty well," Browning replied deferentially.

"I don't think so; we should have done twenty per cent better; there is something wrong somewhere. The company needs shaking up,—a few changes would do no harm."

That was his way, always threatening changes but seldom making any, for no one knew the disadvantage of frequent changing better than John Ganton. Yet, strange to say, the men always thought he meant it, and trembled and struggled accordingly.

"We lost on wheat last month, you know," suggested Browning.

"Yes, yes; I know: bad judgment. Parker ought to have known better."

"He says he followed your orders."

"I told him to buy, but I did not tell him to buy all in sight; there is no reason why a man should lose his head because he gets a hint; but," changing the subject hastily, "how about the poor showing at Omaha?"

"The strike —"

The Office on La Salle Street

"That 's no excuse. Why did Billings have a strike?"

"He could not help it; the men demanded an advance you would not concede, you remember."

"Of course we could not give in to those fellows; it would have meant trouble all along the line. You know that as well as I do. Billings should have seen the leaders and arranged matters."

"He said it could not be done."

"Which means he could not do it. The next time trouble is brewing, I want to be notified earlier. If we had sent Norberg out there in time, there would have been no walk-out."

"Perhaps, but it was a difficult situation. The men were working pretty long hours —"

"Long hours! That is always the complaint. If there is a man in the employ of this company of my age who has worked anywhere near as many hours in his lifetime as I have, I'll give him a lot on Michigan Avenue! Long hours! Why, men nowadays don't know what work is! I don't know what we are coming to, Browning, with all this talk about an eight-hour day!"

Nothing irritated John Ganton more than a demand for fewer hours a day. He would rather advance wages. All his life he had worked early and late. There was hardly a waking moment when his business did not occupy his mind to the exclusion of nearly everything else. His work was his play, his rest, his recreation; and he could not understand how men could wish to fool away time that might be profitably spent working.

Browning was too accustomed to the impatience and irritability of his employer to add fuel to the flame by

Ganton & Co.

contradiction; he waited in silence while the old man looked at the sheets spread on his desk.

"Write Billings to report here next Monday; I will see Parker at three-thirty this afternoon; stir up Liverpool and Vienna sharply; send Rosenthal back to Hamburg with instructions to keep an eye on what they are doing in Berlin,—I expect trouble from that quarter, they are bound to hit us if they can; look over our reports from Japan and China, and give me your suggestions Monday,—either we don't understand those yellow fellows or they don't understand us, for we are not doing the business with them we should for the money we are spending."

"They do not seem to eat the stuff we're canning," said Browning, with as near an approach to a smile as he ever indulged during business hours.

"Then we must can the stuff they do eat, if we buy up the entire crop of rice and rats.—It's a hot day, Browning," he exclaimed, dropping the papers on his desk and facing the window once more.

"The hottest of the season, so far."

"How are things at the Yards?"

"Cattle and hogs in bad condition; three men down from sunstroke, up to one o'clock."

"Phone McCarthy that I want him to look sharp after the cattle such a day as this. Be careful in watering and feeding. It's hotter than blazes. Where is Will?" and a look of anxiety passed over John Ganton's face as he asked about his son, a look he tried to conceal from Browning by keeping his back turned.

"He was at the Yards this morning," Browning answered evasively.

The Office on La Salle Street

"Is n't he there now?"

"Some one telephoned he came down town about eleven o'clock."

"It must be hot at the Yards," the old man remarked after a moment's silence, as if trying to excuse the boy's absence from his place of work.

"Three sunstrokes this morning," repeated Browning.

"Of course, it must be hot out there. Where did they say he had gone?"

"They did not know; he only said he was going down town."

"Did he get his mail off?"

"Well," and Browning hesitated, "not all of it."

The old man's face grew stern as he said slowly, "That won't do, Browning. There has been altogether too much of that sort of thing lately. I shall have to talk with him,—that 's all."

As Browning went out he left the old man still looking out of the window; but the reports on his desk, the heat of the day, the big red-brick building opposite, with its row of windows bearing the signs of his competitor, no longer interested him.

Browning's "private office" consisted of a desk railed off from the others, large and small, that filled the great main office where hundreds of employees bent over their tasks, spurred on by the exhaustless energy of John Ganton, who passed to and fro among them nearly every hour of the day. It was his boast that he could take the place of any man or boy in the service of the company and do twice his work; perhaps he could, at all events his employees believed he could, and worked accordingly.

Ganton & Co.

Browning called up McCarthy at the Yards and gave him directions about the stock,—“and, McCarthy,” he added, “I want you to look after the men, see that those who are down from the heat are well cared for. . . . What’s that, McCarthy? . . . No; the old man did not say anything about the men; but he knew we’d look out for them. . . . Yes, he’s all right. . . . By the way, McCarthy, have you seen Will? . . . Not there? . . . Too bad; it worries the old man. But the boy is all right; he’ll turn up. You and I must keep an eye on him. . . . I say, McCarthy, there is a rumor of trouble with the teamsters,—anything in it? . . . We can handle our men if the International and Union can take care of theirs. The old man will not yield an inch. . . . No; no use of the men asking anything now. They ought to see that this is no time to make demands. . . . That’s a good idea. Give Fanning and Scotty good jobs with nothing to do,—they control the teamsters; need n’t put their names on the pay-roll; send the memorandum to me.” Browning rang off and turned to a short, thick-set man waiting outside the railing, “What is it, Norberg?”

“Trouble with the teamsters,” said the man in a low tone.

“Come inside,” and Browning motioned to the chair beside his desk. Only persons whose business was of importance were asked inside; Browning, like most busy Westerners, found he could do more business and do it faster if he did not ask his visitors to sit down. All day long he turned his chair to and fro, from the ’phone and his stenographer on the left to the railing and his callers on the right, despatching an amazing amount of business. Now and then the matter was of sufficient importance to warrant asking the visitor in.

The Office on La Salle Street

As Norberg sat down, hat in hand, Browning asked quietly,—

“What is the complaint?”

“No complaint in particular; men satisfied, but the leaders are stirring them up and they are getting restless; talking an advance of three cents an hour for single horse, five for teams, and seven for three horses —”

“They ’re getting good wages now.”

“I know it; but the agitators are busy.”

“The company will make no advance.”

“The leaders know that,” said Norberg, dryly.

“Then what are they stirring up trouble now for?”

“For what there is in it.”

“Who control the situation?”

“Fanning, Scotty, and Ballard.”

“I think we can take care of Fanning and Scotty at the Yards. How about Ballard?”

“Hardest nut of the three.”

“Can’t we find a place for him?”

“Don’t think so. He ’s pretty close-mouthed, and it ’s hard to tell what he wants. He says he stands for the men, and won’t listen to reason.”

“Is n’t he one of the Union Company’s men?”

“Yes.”

“Well; take this note to Littlejohn, vice-president of the Union,— you know him,— and if he wishes you to talk with Ballard you do exactly as he tells you. If you and Littlejohn fail to bring the man around, report to me. Don’t let the trouble spread at the present time; nip it now. Say nothing to Fanning and Scotty unless I tell you to.— That ’s all.”

Norberg had hardly disappeared when Allan Borlan,

Ganton & Co.

junior member of Borlan Brothers, another of the great companies at the Yards, called up to say he would be over in a moment to see Browning on important business. Browning knew it was about the trouble brewing among the teamsters, and turned to some telegrams on his desk with something like a sigh. He knew that Allan, with his absurdly strict notions, would be an obstacle in the way of a quick adjustment along easy lines. Youngest of the three brothers, Allan was not yet sufficiently accustomed — hardened, some might say — to modern ways of adjusting labor difficulties. More than once he had made trouble for his brothers and the other packers by untimely objections to the methods proposed. When he came hurrying in a few moments later, Browning looked up and said quietly:

“Well, Allan, what ’s the matter now?”

“What are we going to do about this trouble with the teamsters, Mr. Browning?”

Allan was so young in the Yards, being only a few years out of college, that he still “Mistered” the older men in the business. For that and other characteristics, his sincerity, frankness, and directness among them, he was well liked, even if he did interfere inopportunately now and then.

“Settle it in some way,” answered Browning in the same matter-of-fact tone.

“But how?” The question was insistent.

“That I cannot tell yet. We must wait developments. It may amount to nothing.”

“I think it will; our foreman tells me Fanning, Scotty, and Ballard mean business?”

“I guess they do; in more senses than one,” said Browning, dryly.

The Office on La Salle Street

"And I hear Norberg has been to see them."

"Possibly; it is his business to keep posted on what is going on among the men."

"Well; I want to say, Mr. Browning, that I am opposed to any dealings with these men. There has been altogether too much of that sort of thing, and I won't stand for it any longer. If we must have a strike, let us fight it out fair and square. The men will soon find out the sort of leaders they have, and we will all gain in the end." Allan was very much in earnest.

"A strike of the teamsters would be rather bad just now."

"It might as well come one time as another."

"Yes; but we do not want trouble now. Stocks are too low and trade is too good. Possibly in August —"

"That may all be. We do not want trouble any more than your people; but I won't stand for buying these men off." There was such a ring of dogged firmness in young Borlan's voice that Browning leaned back in his chair and said wearily:

"Well, Allan, it is a matter I do not control —"

"Then I should like to see Mr. Ganton," interrupted Allan, impulsively.

"He is over there," and Browning pointed toward the private office. Paying no attention to the small boy, as he vainly tried to stop him, Allan Borlan stood for a second in the gateway, before he said:

"Mr. Ganton, may I speak with you?"

John Ganton was still seated with his face toward the window, his hand resting on the papers on his desk, but he was thinking of something besides his last month's business and his competitors across the way. He swung around, but

the look of impatience passed quickly away when he recognized his unceremonious visitor; young Borlan was one of the few men doing business at the Yards he liked. He did not know why: perhaps Allan's indefatigable industry, or his exceptional business ability, or his frankness, or, — who knows? — his scrupulous honesty in all dealings.

"Why, Allan, sit down. It's a hot day for June." The old man mopped his forehead and threw his waistcoat back.

"It is hot, and we feel it, coming so early in the season. The men in the pens are suffering —"

"So are the cattle. McCarthy reported many down —"

"I want to see you a moment about this stir among the teamsters."

"Well?" John Ganton's tone was abrupt and harsh, for he knew the young man's peculiar notions.

"What are we going to do about it?"

"Handle it."

"But how?" insisted the young man earnestly.

"The best way we can."

"Does that mean, Mr. Ganton, we are to buy off the leaders?"

"If that is the cheapest way."

"It is n't the cheapest way in the long run, and I am opposed to having any dealings with Fanning, Scotty, and Ballard. Our company will fight it out, if it takes all summer."

"Have you talked with your brothers?" The question came dryly.

"No; but I made up my mind the last time we put up money that we would never do it again, and they know how I feel."

The Office on La Salle Street

"Better leave the settlement of these matters to them. They have been in the business longer and know the Yards."

"That may be, but I am opposed to buying off these rascals, and we will not contribute another penny for that purpose. What good does it do, Mr. Ganton? In three months they are after us again."

"It is a matter of dollars and cents. Just now it is cheaper to pay them than have a strike; a little later a strike may be a good thing. We shall go into August with large stocks and low prices. A strike then would clean us all up in good shape. Yes; a strike would not be a bad thing in August; but not now,—not now, my boy."

"And so you will pay this ring of rascals tribute," exclaimed Borlan, hotly.

"They say all money contributed is used for union purposes —".

"But you know better, Mr. Ganton. You know that they divide it up among themselves, and I don't see how you can permit it. You are the head of this great industry,—all the others follow in your footsteps, whether they want to or not,—and you can put a stop to anything you don't like. Let us deal with our men direct, and kick those three agitators out of the Yards."

There was something in the tone of Borlan that appealed to Ganton; his vanity, too, was flattered by being acknowledged the head of the great slaughtering and packing industry; and he answered kindly:

"You are young in the business, Allan, and have many things to learn; you'd better let your brothers handle these labor troubles; they've been through the mill and are hardened. You say, 'Deal directly with the men.' That cannot

be done; can you talk with every one of the thousands of men in your employ? No. Then you must deal through your representatives; can each of your men talk with your representatives? No; hundreds cannot even speak English. Then the men must act through their representatives. You choose yours; they choose theirs. If their representatives happen to be rascals, that is not your fault, but theirs; if their representatives sell them out, that is their affair, not yours; if their leaders say they would rather have so many thousands of dollars in hand — for the good of the union, of course — rather than strike for shorter hours or better pay, that is their affair, and a question of dollars and cents to us whether we pay it. It is not for us to dictate to the regularly chosen leaders of the men what their demands shall be. They may use the money we give them for the union, for the good of the cause, and they may not,— that is none of our business. If the men select dishonest leaders, then the men must suffer the consequences. Shall we insist that the men strike and everybody suffer, when their committee tells us a contribution of ten or twenty thousand dollars to the union will tide matters over and satisfy every one? What right have you or I to assume these men are dishonest?”

He looked at the young man with a quizzical look in his keen gray eyes.

“That ’s all very plausible, Mr. Ganton, but you know the men are deceived by those rascals. If we turn them down once, they will soon lose their influence.”

“To make room for others of the same breed? The men do not choose their leaders any more than a political party chooses the men who make up the ‘machine.’ They choose themselves. The leaders come to the top like corks, and

The Office on La Salle Street

you can't keep them down. When one disappears another like him takes his place. It is not a question of individual honesty. The labor movement demands leaders of a certain calibre, and it gets them, just as every organization and every business is managed by the men who are fitted to run it. If men get in control who are too strict and too honest for the business, they make a failure of it and have to get out. There's no use preaching to those you do business with."

Allan Borlan was one of the few men to whom John Ganton talked at any great length; it seemed to amuse him to play upon the young man's susceptibilities, to speak what he considered plain truths in a harsh, almost brutal manner.

"That may be all very true," was the dogged response, "but I can't see it helps matters any for us to deal with these fellows on their level. All I can say is, we won't give them a cent."

"What do you propose to do?"

"Fight."

"Why not give the men what they demand? Would n't that be more phi-lanthropic, according to your high notions?" John Ganton grew sarcastic.

"No, for the men themselves are making no demands; they know conditions are not ripe, and they are satisfied. It's their leaders who are stirring up the trouble. I've talked with our men, and know they are against a strike."

"But if called they will go out like a lot of sheep."

"That may be, but let us fight it out, once for all."

"Better talk with your brothers."

"No; my mind is made up. We will not contribute a cent to these fellows; we'll shut down first. I came over to appeal to you, Mr. Ganton, to join us in that stand."

"I will consider the matter." Ganton swung about and once more gazed out of the window, his right hand impatiently fingering the papers on his desk. Allan Borlan knew the interview was at an end; as he passed out he said to Browning, "I hope you people will stand with us if there is to be a fight."

"What does the old man say?" asked Browning, looking up from his desk.

"That he will think the matter over."

"Oh!" was Browning's only reply; a moment later he was called into the private office.

"Tell Norberg," John Ganton said sharply, "we want no strike until August; he must stave it off until then. The Borlans will not contribute; the rest of us must put up the money. If their men are called out, it does not concern us. The matter will require careful handling, Browning."

"They always have acted with us. What's the matter?" Browning's tone expressed his surprise.

"The young man has kicked over the traces and must take his medicine," was the dry response.

"Too bad; he's a fine fellow."

"The best of the lot, and bound to make his mark. I wish my own boy had his industry and — I wonder where Will is; call up the Club and see if he has been there this afternoon. Ask for Perkins, and tell him I wish to know; otherwise he will lie like a thief."

He did not say so, but Browning knew it would be idle to call Perkins. Often as he had done so, he always got the same answer; Perkins liked the son more than he feared the father.

At that moment Will Ganton was playing bridge in one

The Office on La Salle Street

of the card-rooms of the Club, and was a winner to the extent of some fifteen or sixteen hundred dollars.

"It 's too beastly hot to play," exclaimed George Axford throwing down his cards.

"Not if you are winning, old boy," Will replied blandly.

"Oh, let 's quit."

"Just as you say, but you are something out just now."

"We 'll settle and take it out of you another time. How do we stand?" After a moment's figuring, Axford made a memorandum on a piece of paper which he stuck in his waist-coat pocket, saying, "All right; send you a check to-morrow." He pushed his chair back from the card-table.

The other loser, Lawrence Delaney, hesitated a moment. "If I send you a check to-morrow, would you mind holding it until next day before depositing?"

"That 's all right, Larry." Will looked up surprised. "What 's the matter? Exchequer low?"

"No; but I am carrying some customers on rather slender margins, and my account is pretty heavily overdrawn. I don't want to crowd the bank too hard."

"How is the market, anyway?" asked Axford.

"Dull; nothing doing."

"What 's the outlook?"

"Professional market for next thirty days, then a bull movement," replied Delaney, with confidence.

"What makes you think so?"

"Many things,—too many to explain; but there is sure to be an upward movement soon, barring serious complications."

"Such as?"

Ganton & Co.

"Wars, crop disasters, strikes —"

"Well, there is not much danger of war, and the crop reports are all right up to now, but strikes may come any day."

"All quiet on the Potomac so far, and the outlook for the next sixty days is good. But look here, Will, is there anything in this rumor of trouble at the Yards?" Delaney turned to young Ganton.

"I guess not," the latter answered with indifference, sipping his Scotch-and-soda. "Always something brewing, you know, but the old man manages to keep out of trouble when he wants to."

"But suppose he should not want to?" insisted Delaney. "It might be for the packers' interest to let the men go out. A man not a thousand miles from the Yards intimated as much to me this morning."

"Can't say anything about that, not in my department; but I would n't lie awake nights worrying about it."

"Well, if there are no labor troubles of importance, we shall have a better market by August."

"Thought August was always a dull month, with every one out of Wall Street," said Axford.

"Ordinarily, yes; but conditions this year are peculiar. There are two or three large pools that must realize on their holdings, and I have reason to believe they have chosen August as a good month for a spurt."

"If you are sure of what you say, you may take on some stock for me," said Axford.

"And a thousand shares or so for me," said Ganton.

Delaney made a minute of the orders, and before he finished his losses at cards were more than covered by his

The Office on La Salle Street

commissions. It was not often Larry Delaney lost at cards, — he was so good a player that his friends often called him “the Professional,” — and when he did lose, the winners usually became his customers before he left the table. He had built up his business as a stock-broker in the card-rooms of the Club, and his customers seldom called at his small office on La Salle Street. Once, indeed, a member of the house committee quietly notified him the Club was not the place to transact business. This made him a little more careful in the reading-room and *café*, but in the card-rooms he was free to do as he pleased. He gradually built up a profitable business, most of which was carried on his books under initials and numbers, the key to which he alone knew. This system possessed many advantages in the way of secrecy, but it possessed also some disadvantages, as, for instance, when one customer, irritable and suspicious from losses, insisted upon looking over his books and tracing the sales and purchases in New York, it was found impossible to identify each transaction with sufficient certainty to say whether it was his order or that of some one else which had been executed. With great patience and plausibility, Delaney seemingly made everything plain; but to the customer, a clear-headed man in matters of accounts and book-keeping, there seemed to be great possibilities in Delaney’s method. He could not detect anything wrong without examining and comparing the transactions of every customer, — a request Delaney courteously but firmly refused, — so he left the office muttering “bucket shop” in a tone audible enough to Larry, though he pretended he did not hear.

No one knew much about Delaney. He came from New York, and was acquainted with most of the men on the Street

Ganton & Co.

there. He was a keen card player, a good golfer, a good dancer, a popular club man, and all in all a useful and ornamental member of society, as society goes. No one could discover he had any particular social antecedents in the East, but he certainly knew a good many New Yorkers, spoke with indifference of Narragansett, and with more or less familiarity about Newport. To the men he was useful and companionable; while the doubtful character of his status made him interesting to the women, who liked him because they more than half believed they ought not to receive him. His good looks, suavity, accomplishments, and excellent manners made him too desirable a guest for a hostess struggling against a dearth of agreeable men to neglect, however discriminating in her selection.

As the young men came out of the elevator, Perkins in a low tone said to Ganton, "There was an inquiry for you, sir, from the office."

"Who?"

"Mr. Browning, I think, sir."

"What did you tell him?"

"That you were not here, sir."

"Quite right, Perkins. When I'm here, I'm not here; when I'm not here, I'm often here,— keeps Perkins busy remembering the combination, Larry," and Will Ganton laughed. "I'm afraid some day you'll get things mixed, Perkins, and then there'll be the old Harry to pay; I half believe the governor thinks you lie to him."

"There was another call for you, sir."

"Who?"

"She would leave no name, sir."

"She — she — what 'she,' Perkins?"

The Office on La Salle Street

"I think it was the same lady who called up Saturday. She left a telephone number and wished you would call up when you came in."

Ganton took the slip of paper and went to the telephone-booth. In a few moments he came out hurriedly, saying: "Perkins, call a cab.— Larry, I am going to the Park Club to dine, and I 'm asked to bring you along; come on."

"Who 's the party?" asked Delaney, laconically.

"Mrs. Jack and her sister."

"Who 's the chaperon?"

"Mrs. Jack can take care of herself."

"I was n't worrying about Mrs. Jack. I was thinking about my weak, defenceless self —"

"Let up, old man. You 'll meet us at the club house at six-thirty sharp?"

"All right; it goes."

CHAPTER II

GALA-NIGHT AT THE PARK CLUB

IT was the regular gala-night at the Park Club. Once a week a *table d'hôte* was served, and an orchestra struggled heroically, and in the main successfully, to drown conversation; though whenever Mrs. Jack had a dinner party, whether large or small, the orchestra grew discouraged.

The evening being warm, the small tables were arranged on the broad veranda facing the lake instead of inside, and every seat was taken. As usual, Mrs. Jack had secured her favorite corner, where she could see everything and be seen by all. Too short to be handsome, too clever to be homely, she was of that type — common in one sense, uncommon in another — which somehow ties the world and half-world together, lingering wistfully on the borders of the forbidden and not quite achieving the promised land, which makes society either run, fight, or follow with reluctant admiration. In short, Mrs. Jack was one of those interesting creatures who eclipse their husbands after securing names and fortunes, relegating them to that sub-social obscurity for which Nature in her wisdom intended the husbands of such women. Mrs. Jack appropriated all that was serviceable in John Brown Wilton's good, old-fashioned, anti-slavery name, dropped the 'Brown' as impossible, rechristened herself Mrs. Jack, with occasional reference to the Wilton, and made her own whirlpool in society. Before marriage she was one of the daughters of Jem Keating, of doubtful fame; after her

Gala-Night at the Park Club

marriage to Wilton, a thoroughly good fellow with family and money, she cut loose from all former connections and made her own way, carrying along her sister May, whose beauty and wit made her an attractive and attracting companion. No one could really say anything against Mrs. Jack, and therefore every woman tried; she was the most talked about woman in the city, and that amused her. Once when her husband protested against so much notoriety, she had said:

"Before I married you, you were a nonentity; now everybody is asking who you are," and Wilton pondered long and earnestly the exact nature of his status, concluding at length with no little philosophy that if a man cannot achieve fame for himself the next best thing socially is to have a wife who can achieve it for him. He therefore accepted the situation, a situation in which if he was occasionally required to perform irksome social tasks, there were long periods of inactivity when his wife apparently forgot his very existence. The night in question was in one of those periods. He had not been invited to dine at the Park Club with Mrs. Jack; hence, like the well-bred man he was, he was not there, but went with his older sister to the Ruskin Settlement in the purlieus to hear a paper on "Social Strata," by Miss Higbee Higginson of Boston, the net result of which to him was a confused notion that the stratum he occupied bore to the oppressed masses about the same relation that a comfortable mattress bears to the creaking springs beneath, with his wife's stratum spread over him like a wet blanket.

Miss Higbee Higginson seemed to know what she was talking about in her high, shrill voice. She was not at all satisfied with the existing arrangement of social strata,—neither was he for that matter. Nothing but a social

upheaval little short of a revolution would satisfy her notions; he was rather inclined to agree with her. He, too, could think of a stratum or two that would be all the better for a "society-quake,"—the term was hers, and it pleased her hearers every time she used it, so she used it frequently.

Miss Higbee was one of the bright and shining lights of the Ruskin Settlement. Her lectures were eagerly listened to by the radical element of the quarter; without knowing it she was the arch-priestess of all the socialism and much of the anarchism that centred about the settlement; when she talked of "Social Strata," the prosperous and well-to-do were left without a shred of an excuse for living—and with hardly an excuse for dying, since all hope of salvation was denied them in explicit terms. There were points John Brown Wilton did not applaud, but he did enjoy the digs at the members of the "Smart Set," "who spend their useless lives in idle revelry, who exploit the lives of others that they may drink from golden chalices the blood of the downtrodden and the oppressed—" "Hot stuff!" some one shouted, and there was a burst of applause in which he joined so vigorously that his sister, scandalized, nudged him to keep quiet.

Meanwhile Mrs. Jack was dealing with conditions rather than theories, and having a much better time.

"Where's Jack?" asked Will Ganton rather inopportunistically, during a lull in the conversation.

"Dear me, how do I know?" sighed Mrs. Jack.

"What a question on so convivial an occasion," protested Delaney. "Don't you know, my dear fellow, it is quite contrary to the rules nowadays to ask after a charming woman's husband?"

Gala-Night at the Park Club

"There, I hope you 'll remember that; while I am so domestic I don't mind it, there are others who might," and Mrs. Jack glanced significantly in the direction of the adjoining tables as if there were women present who would be embarrassed by such an inquiry.

"Hope you 'll forgive me, but it's been so long since I've seen Jack. Still on earth?" queried Will, with an appearance of deep concern.

"Very much on earth," said Mrs. Jack.

"Of the earth, earthy, whereas the angel who sought to work his social redemption by marrying him still wings her way in the cerulean blue accompanied by a few admiring satellites like ourselves.—Here's to the angel!" Delaney raised his glass.

"And her satellites," interrupted Mrs. Jack.

"To one, at least." May Keating looked at Will and smiled, as she sipped her champagne.

"Hold, stop, not another drop," Delaney raised his hand in exaggerated protest. "Why am I, who proposed this toast, who framed the beautiful sentiment which we are about to drink, whose poetic thought, next to the angel herself, is the inspiration of the moment,—why am I cut out by the lady on my left? That's what I want to know." Delaney's mock indignation rose to great heights.

"Possibly because you had flown so far in the cerulean you were out of sight; possibly because you were not fit to fly with angels; possibly —" But Delaney interrupted:

"'Hold, enough,' as somebody said to Macduff. I acknowledge my unworthiness to be even an obscure unit in this bright constellation; but when it comes to pluming one's feathers for flight, my wings are of a spotless and snowy

Ganton & Co.

whiteness as compared with the ruffled pinions of our mutual friend, William Ganton.— There, Miss May Keating, what do you think —”

“I can’t think when you are about, Larry; it’s just impossible, you know. Between you and that snare-drum thought is out of the question; one can’t get a word in edgewise —”

“But when your words do come, they come edgewise, don’t they, Larry?” laughed Ganton. “Here’s to you, old boy, plumage or no plumage! If no one will drink your health, I will.”

“And I,” chimed in Mrs. Jack.

“Your health and your modesty, which is so conspicuous by its —” said May Keating.

“Enough,” interrupted Delaney, “many a good toast is spoiled by too long a speech. I myself will drink to my health and my modesty, which, as the discriminating Miss Keating says, is ‘so conspicuous.’”

“Now that we have disposed of the angel and Mr. Delaney, tell me, Mr. Ganton, what are you going to do this summer?” May Keating turned to Will, leaving her sister and Delaney to their own stray thoughts.

“Can’t tell — work, I suppose.”

“Do you really work out there at the Yards?”

“Some of the time. Come out and see.”

“I should like to; I’ve never been, and here I have lived in Chicago all my life. But that is always the way; every stranger coming to Chicago visits the Stock Yards,—to me it has always seemed an awful place.”

“You are right, it is an awful place. There are days when I just can’t stand it. To-day it was particularly awful,” said Will, soberly.



It was the regular gala-night at the Park Club, and, as usual, Mrs. Jack had secured her favorite corner.

Gala-Night at the Park Club

"Why are n't you in the office down town?"

"That is not father's idea; he began in a slaughter-house and he thinks I should. But it is one thing to start in as a boy killing cattle, and it's another thing to let a fellow play in the fresh air until he is grown and then throw him into the pens and rendering tanks."

"But you won't have to work at the Yards long, will you?" May Keating sat with her elbows resting on the table, her chin in one hand and her delightfully modulated voice expressing possibly more sympathy than she really felt. To Will Ganton she seemed unusually attractive that night, so different from her vivacious sister, so tall and graceful, so perfectly self-possessed. Envious tongues called her clever and scheming,—she was certainly clever, far too clever for Will Ganton.

"I cannot tell," he replied thoughtfully; "it all depends. I guess I am not shortening my period of probation by jumping my job as I did to-day."

"Does your father know?"

"Know?—gad, he knows everything that goes on at the Yards; nothing escapes him. I'll bet I had not been gone from the Yards two hours before he knew it." Will's tone expressed the admiration he felt for his father's sagacity, and at the same time a certain amount of apprehension.

"Who would tell on you?"

"No one,—that is, not willingly; but no one dares lie to him, except Perkins at the Club. It is more natural to Perkins to lie; it's part of his business."

"Are you not afraid of falling out with your father some day?" May Keating's voice dropped and she looked keenly at Ganton.

Ganton & Co.

"No; he must have some one to step into his shoes."

"But you have a brother —"

"John? Oh, yes; but he can never make a business man out of John. He gave up all notion of that long ago. John is a dreamer."

"I heard some one say he is a very unusual young man."

"He has a lot of queer notions. I don't understand them, — guess no one else does, — but he is a mighty good fellow in spite of his notions."

"You say your father takes no interest in him?"

"Does n't understand him; no one does. Father is down on him because he won't go into the Yards and take hold in the business. John can't stand the Yards; it makes him sick. He went there once when he was a little fellow, and he did n't get over it for weeks. Gad, I shall never forget how pale he was when he came out of the killing-room. If we had not pulled him into the air he would have toppled over in a dead faint. Father was always down on him after that."

"Has he no taste for business?"

"None at all; cares for nothing but books. As a little fellow he used to say he would like to write a book."

"Perhaps he will."

"Hope so. We ought to have an author in the family, and there is no use trying to make a packer of him."

"Your father, then, looks to you to take his place at the head of the business some day?"

"That's his idea," was the careless response.

"Then why don't you work hard for a few years and show him what you can do?" Her voice had a practical ring.

"Easier said than done. I would rather play a game of

Gala-Night at the Park Club

bridge in a cool room at the Club on a hot afternoon than fume in the stench at the Yards; I would rather dine here with you on such an evening as this than pore over reports in father's stuffy den at the house."

"But he will not like it."

"Not the first time. To-morrow I'll make up by doing the work of two men — oh, you need not smile. I can do it, and he knows it. That's all that holds my position with Ganton & Co. Whew! let's not talk shop,— makes me hot to think of it,— three men down from the heat to-day at the Yards. What are you going to do this summer?" he asked abruptly.

"Nothing."

"Where are you going?"

"Nowhere."

Ganton looked up surprised at the tired ring in the voice. "Why, I thought you and John and Mrs. Jack were going to Europe."

"That is given up."

"Why, may I ask?"

"Oh, a dozen reasons. John won't go, Sally has changed her mind, and I — well, I don't count; I somehow am out of the spirit of going myself."

"Mighty glad on my own account you're not going. I should have missed you,— town gets pretty slow in summer."

"And we furnish the vaudeville,"— just a tinge of irony.

"Better than that, you are the green spot in a hot and dusty desert," exclaimed Will, earnestly.

"Thanks for the sentiment, even if the metaphor is a bit worn."

"We can dine here often, though I like almost any night

better than these band nights, when every social rowdy in town turns out and tries to talk the music down."

"Not very complimentary to Mrs. Jack, who always has her table."

"Oh, I did n't mean Mrs. Jack,—you know — she can do anything —" Will stammered with some confusion.

"Rather ambiguous. What, for instance, can she do, that others cannot?" The tone gave point to the question.

"Oh, she can do as she pleases, you know."

"But are we 'social rowdies' because we come band nights?" persisted the young woman, enjoying his obvious embarrassment.

"Why, no,—of course not,—you know what I mean."

"Better than you yourself, perhaps, for without knowing it you include us with the others here." Her voice became a trifle hard as she continued: "And why are we not social rowdies? I like your phrase; it is picturesque and highly descriptive. Are we not loafers on the highways of society, noisy idlers and lazy tramps, without trade or useful occupation in life? If not social rowdies, at least vagrants; I, for one, plead guilty, and you confess you have shirked work to-day. Mr. Delaney, what do you think Mr. Ganton calls those who come here to dine on band nights? 'Social rowdies.'"

"Oh, you wretch!" exclaimed Mrs. Jack.

"Not bad, Will. I'm one of the worst, and there are others." Delaney cast his eye over the many tables, picturesque in the gathering darkness with their many softly shaded lights and the chattering parties of gay diners. "'Social rowdies,' yes; I can see a good many, but surely Mrs. Jack and Miss Keating —"

Gala-Night at the Park Club

“Are quite as worthless as the rest, as every one in the room would be only too quick to admit.” Now there was a ring of defiance in May Keating’s voice, which did not escape Delaney’s keen ear. He looked at the brilliant girl with admiration; he knew she was clever, much deeper than her sister, and he knew she fully appreciated the slender tenure whereby she held her social position; but he did not know how clearly she viewed the world about her, and the exceeding accuracy of her judgment of both men and women and the motives that swayed them. Well as he knew the elder sister, Delaney sometimes felt he did not know the younger at all; she seemed entirely indifferent to his devotion to Mrs. Jack, and yet he felt sure his attentions had been the subject of many a sharp discussion, and he could see that the younger exercised a restraining influence of which there was never a sign in public. His respect for May Keating increased accordingly; in fact, he was a little in awe of those clear, penetrating blue eyes, which were so often hard and cold, and might be — he was very sure — relentless and cruel. When they first met, with the confidence born of many major and more minor successes, he had devoted himself to her for several weeks, only to find that as an admirer he simply counted numerically; he could not get beyond the friendship which springs up casually between two clever and congenial people, and even this friendship was chastened by a feeling of distrust, slight on his side, possibly more pronounced on hers. He doubted the genuineness of her feelings, she doubted the honesty and strength of his character; but he found her a most delightful companion, she found him a most agreeable acquaintance.

At the third table from the corner, Mrs. Northwood King

was saying to Mrs. Range Salter: "This is the second time Will Ganton has dined with May Keating and Mrs. Jack within three weeks. What do you think of it?"

"And they were here last Saturday afternoon for tea." Mrs. Range Salter eyed the two in question as if they were offenders whose guilt was only too clearly established. Mrs. Northwood King had a marriageable sister, and Mrs. Range Salter a daughter who would be marriageable in another season.

"Mrs. Jack is doing all she can to help that along," said Mrs. Northwood King, with some tartness. "I can't understand how some women will go to such lengths."

"Nor I, but May Keating won't get Will Ganton." Mrs. Range Salter spoke significantly.

"How do you know she won't? That's what they used to say about Sally Keating and John Wilton; but she married him just the same. May is cleverer than her sister ever thought of being."

"There was no John Ganton to look out for Wilton, and that makes a world of difference." Mrs. Range Salter nodded her head knowingly.

"Do you mean to say Will's father does not approve of May Keating?" asked Mrs. Northwood King, agreeably surprised.

"All I know is, that Salter heard him say, speaking of John Wilton, that if a son of his married a daughter of Jem Keating he would cut him off without a cent."

"That would settle it, for May Keating is not marrying any penniless young man." Mrs. Northwood King felt relieved. The next day Will Ganton received two notes. One read:—

Gala-Night at the Park Club

DEAR MR. GANTON:

Will you dine with us at the Park Club Saturday evening at seven? There will be only my sister and Northwood. Do not bother to write, but telephone reply.

Very sincerely yours,
VIRGINIA KING.

The other was very similar:—

DEAR MR. GANTON:

Will you dine with us at the Park Club Saturday evening at seven? As my daughter does not come out until next season, we shall be quite by ourselves. I do hope you have no other engagement.

Very sincerely,
HARRIET SALTER.

Will groaned as he put the notes in his pocket, hoping something would turn up so he could truthfully say he had an engagement. He finally accepted the Salter invitation, not that he liked the Salters better than the Kings, but Salter was one of the principal owners of the Union Company, and it fell in with his father's peculiar policies to cultivate in certain directions competitors he fought unscrupulously in others. Will felt that the dinner Saturday night would figure for him as a credit mark in an account where the debit balance was already too large.

CHAPTER III

NOTORIETY

LONG after they were home that night Mrs. Jack, moved by some secret impulse, stole into her sister's room, expecting to find her in bed and asleep, and yet feeling that she might not be. May Keating was seated by the open window apparently lost in contemplating the darkened windows of the houses opposite, and in listening to the rumble of a belated cab clattering over the pavement.

"Why, May, why are n't you in bed?"

"And you?" was the quiet response.

"I?— why, I could not sleep — so —"

"Neither could I, so I am looking at those houses opposite, and wondering whether behind each dark front there are pleasant dreams, or — nightmares."

"How silly! Go to bed."

"I am not sleepy."

"You ought to be. What are you thinking of?"

"I told you — dreams."

"Your own, May?" Mrs. Jack's voice was tender as she sat down beside her sister and put an arm about her neck.

"Perhaps."

"Tell me what they are, dearie."

"They are too shadowy to take shape in words."

"Are you thinking of Will Ganton?"

"Possibly," slowly, "but I dare say I was thinking more

Notoriety

of myself, and of life, and of the utterly idle things we do from day to day. What does it all amount to? I wish —”

“Do you like him?” interrupted her sister.

“I don’t know,— how can I tell? There are things about him any woman would like. He is a good fellow, yet so weak in some ways. But then, what difference does it make whether I like him or not?” adding, with some bitterness, “I suppose I must marry him if I can.”

“Why do you talk that way, May? If he is a good-hearted fellow you are sure to love him. I did not care the snap of my finger for Jack when I married him, and yet we are perfectly happy.”

“Are you?”

“Of course we are. What a question!” Mrs. Jack spoke irritably; she did not like the pointed manner in which her sister spoke.

But May continued as if she had something on her mind that must be said: “Do you realize, Sally, that Harold is getting to be quite a boy; that he will soon begin to notice more than you care to have him see?”

“Nonsense; Harold is just a baby.”

“With eyes and ears that are getting keener every day. He is his papa’s boy. Are you willing he should forget you entirely?”

“Why are you always talking about Harold, and what I do?” asked Mrs. Jack, in a tone of annoyance. “I am sure I am a devoted mother; every one says so; you talk as if I never saw the child.”

“It is not enough, Sally, to see him and lavish tenderness upon him. He knows you love him, but by-and-bye he will begin to see that you do not love Jack.”

"But I tell you I do love Jack."

"Then why not have him out with you?"

"Oh, he is so hopelessly matter-of-fact. You know that company bores him, and he does not care to go out."

"Because he knows you do not care to have him, because he feels you would much rather be with your friends, and because he loves you too much to interfere with your pleasures. Jack is a good fellow. Men like him, and I like him better than some of the men you have about; I believe I could have married Jack and been happy."

"I wish to gracious you had!" exclaimed Mrs. Jack, with a mixture of irritability and amusement. "Then I could have sympathized with you — both."

May laughed, but quickly becoming serious, she continued quietly:

"It is a sore subject, and you must forgive me; but, Sally, can you not manage to see less of Larry Delaney? I am sure," she continued rapidly, pressing her sister's hand, "you do not care especially for him, and that there is nothing wrong in it all, but people do not know these things. They talk and they look at us so when we are out that sometimes it seems as if I could not stand it."

During the moment's silence which followed, May watched a swarm of big, filmy-winged sand-flies that fluttered about the street lamp just below her window only to lose their lives in seeking the shining goal. For a second it seemed to her as if she saw all society in the swarm of insects, and all the people she knew flying hither and thither in a mad struggle to reach some glittering end, only to fail and fall and be trampled and crushed. In one of those instantaneous psychological processes of which dreams are made, the panorama

Notoriety

of her social environment spread before her, the flies even began to take familiar shapes, she could see her sister and herself, and —

Mrs. Jack's voice was cold and hard as she said deliberately:

"You have spoken of Lawrence Delaney, and — and of my friends and manner of living before, and I have put you off, May, with some sort of an answer, because — well, because I did not think it worth while to talk seriously of matters which might never concern you; but since you insist upon trying to manage my affairs and make of me a sedate, respectable, and stupid matron in society, I will tell you why it cannot be done, on your account even more than my own."

May listened with surprise. She had never heard her sister speak in this hard, matter-of-fact way before; for the time being the frivolous woman of the world seemed to have disappeared.

"You and I are daughters of James Keating, familiarly known as 'old Jem Keating'; when you were only a child and I a little girl, our father failed under conditions which made him an outcast in the business world; while you were still in school I was struggling to gain some sort of foothold in society. As the daughter of old Jem Keating, I did not stand much chance in competition along conventional lines; but I had to win a husband who had money. That I did, but as Mrs. John Brown Wilton I was received on only the most formal terms, and every stupid old woman in the city looked down upon me.

"I soon saw that people do not get on socially by crawling; that the thing to do is to fight. Society is jealous of but one thing, notoriety, which it feverishly seeks, while condemning

Ganton & Co.

it hypocritically. The short cut for the newcomer to social distinction is notoriety; social success is founded on notoriety, and while a few of the sedate and eminently respectable maintain their positions without it, even they do so by entertaining and catering to the notorious. The women they most fear, the men they most despise, are the brilliant and clever guests at their tables. To be talked about is a woman's surest passport, and the more vicious the gossip the more certain her place at the right hand of the host. Go where you will, look around you, ask the credentials of the best known women in the room,—not the figure-heads, but the real leaders, those without whom any social function would be a failure,—and you will find the credentials of each are summed up in the word 'notoriety,' that the prestige of each is based upon the things said about her, and that men like her and women envy her for the gossip and scandal attached to her name, for what she has done, or is whispered to have done.

"The clever woman is the one who manages to acquire a large amount of doubtful reputation at a very small expenditure of virtue. It has been my ambition to be at the head of the latter class, and I have succeeded. I encourage the suit of every admirer, but I draw the line where I please. Jack has nothing to complain of except that I do not take him, like a lap-dog, wherever I go; but he is bright enough to know it would not do; what chance would I, Sally Keating, stand at family dinner parties with Jack at my side? The invitations would be few and long between, and the guests carefully selected with reference to my parentage and Jack's *mésalliance*. But as 'Mrs. Jack,' with all the agreeable men in town at my beck and call, I am in demand everywhere,

Notoriety

for every good matron knows only too well that I can 'queer' her party if not invited.

'I like the fun of it all, I enjoy the fight; to win out against women who would like to scratch and bite even while they are fawning is worth while. I did it first for my own sake, now I am doing it partly for yours. When you are married, May, I may settle down, and you can take up the battle, or, if you prefer, you can avoid notoriety and be as stupidly respectable as you please,—that is your lookout,—but until you are married 'sensation' is our winning card."

May had never heard her sister speak so long about anything; it sounded like a chapter out of some cynical book, and it depressed her because she felt there was more or less truth in it all, because she knew that most of the women and not a few of the men of their acquaintance looked upon them to a certain extent as two brilliant and successful adventuresses. Again and again had this reflection hardened her heart and made her feel ready to fight the devil with fire. Often in company she would look about and feel that if it were not for her sister's money and dash and her own beauty and intelligence, their pretended friends would turn and rend them, and at such times the loneliness of her position forced itself upon her.

Even while her sister was speaking, the thought of Will Ganton hovered in her mind, and by the time Mrs. Jack had finished, it seemed as if fate pointed to him as her only hope. She did not love him,—that was certain; she did not love any one,—that was not quite so certain, for two summers before, at Newport, she had met—but that was merely an episode of a season, and the fascination she felt could hardly be called love. At least she tried to persuade herself it was

not love, but then there are so many kinds of love and so many degrees in each kind, that who can say what is and what is not love? But whether love or not, he had no money, and from a worldly point of view scant prospects, so what was the use? Why should she think it was more than a passing fancy on his part, a bit of midsummer madness on hers? There was nothing said, nothing done, scarce so much as merest friends betray at meeting, and yet —

Long after her sister had left the room, she sat there looking out of the window and thinking. The sand-flies swarmed in foolish flight about the light, the walk was strewn with those that flew too near.

CHAPTER IV

JOHN GANTON, JR.

JOHN GANTON, JR., had fully persuaded himself that he had no taste for business. He looked upon the Yards and everything connected with that place of blood and offal with positive aversion. Once as a boy he had visited the slaughter-houses, and should he live a thousand years, never, he was certain, would the scene fade from his mind; never could he lose the impression of those hot, fetid, steam-filled rooms, those horrible, bubbling vats, those endless rows of reeking carcasses still warm from life, those awful killing-rooms flowing with blood, where his clothes were spattered and in his fright he hugged one of the great iron pillars lest he, too, should fall into the clutches of the merciless men who laughed as they slaughtered the great, round-eyed cattle which stumbled from the darkness of the runways into the light to be killed! For years after he could not be induced to eat meat, and even now it was so distasteful to him that for long periods he went without.

What could he do in such a business as that? Nothing, his father had said before he let him go to the university; nothing, his father repeated each time they met; nothing, — that seemed only too plain. His brother would succeed to the business; that was quite well understood; and he — well, no one seemed to know just what he would do, except his father did not propose that he should become a “drivelling idiot of a professor,” as he put it.

John Ganton the elder had little use for learned or literary men. His own education had been a few winter months of schooling in the few years while he was working as a boy on a farm, and he was accustomed to refer to those days as mostly wasted. "I got my education by hard knocks," he frequently said, adding, with a philosophy possibly profounder than he realized, "Life is the only schoolmaster worth having: a boy never knows more than he learns himself." Considering the poverty of his early advantages, it was amazing how he had managed to learn so much, not only about his own business, but about things in general. Like many a self-made man, he was so resourceful, so strong mentally, that professional and literary men were subdued and awed in his presence, instinctively yielding before his aggressive personality. Hence his contempt for them, for he acknowledged no equals except those in the business world who fought him instead of cringing.

When it was suggested that John should become a lawyer, he said bluntly, "I buy my pettifoggers as I do my cattle; it don't pay to raise 'em." And when another friend spoke of the practice of medicine, he blurted out, "Don't want any smelling pill-mixer about my house." It was his boast that he had never called a doctor for himself in his life. "A dose of castor oil now and then is all the medicine any man needs," was a favorite maxim; and he used to say, "The drug habit is worse 'n the drink habit, and of all fools the man who dopes himself is the biggest."

However, neither law nor medicine had the slightest attraction for the son, and it was therefore no disappointment when he heard that his father had vetoed the suggestions.

His four years of university life were drawing to a close,

John Ganton, Jr.

and nothing had been decided for the future; though he was to go to England for a time. Such were his father's orders in the letter just received,—a curt, formal, business-like note dictated to "Steno. No. 13," indorsed "File AA42721," and which read as follows:

JOHN GANTON, JR.

Dear Sir:—You have finished your college course. It is my desire that you now learn something of business, even though you adopt some other career. I have placed with the Illinois Trust Co. bonds which will yield you an income of \$10,000.00 per year; this leaves you free to choose your own occupation. In return, however, I expect you to spend one year in the service of Ganton & Co.; if at the end of that time you wish to leave you may do so. You will report at the Liverpool office at once, sailing on the "Deutschland" Thursday of next week. You will find all necessary instructions awaiting you on the other side. Call at the New York office for your steamship ticket, and all necessary funds.

Enclosed find draft for \$1,000.00 with which to settle any outstanding bills and accounts. Yours, JOHN GANTON.

The curt and formal tone of this letter affected him profoundly. He knew the disappointment his father felt, and what it cost him to dictate such a letter. The year in Liverpool was a last effort to win him over, to persuade him to take an active interest in the great company; the provision for the income was a confession in advance that the effort would prove futile. He felt grateful for this assurance of independence, for at the end of twelve months he would be free to do as he pleased, to travel, to study, to write,—anything; the least he could do in return would be to work just the best he could during the year ahead.

No one, not even his sons, ever thought of addressing

Ganton & Co.

John Ganton on other than formal terms. Affection seemed to have died out of old John Ganton's nature, or, more accurately speaking, to have been buried beneath a weight of other and more important considerations. With the rapid expansion of his business, he had become more and more absorbed, until he thought of little else day and night. His plain and unpretentious wife had gradually retired into the background, until she was merely the silent manager of his matter-of-fact household. She did not care for society, and was conspicuous only in certain charitable enterprises which she did not dare discuss with her husband; in some of the poor quarters about the Yards she was as well known to the women and children as he was to the men, and much more favorably. Yet in all she did she tried hard to keep out of sight, to secure for others the credit which rightfully belonged to herself; but, in spite of her efforts to conceal her good deeds, they were known, and she was respected and loved accordingly.

In the early days of John Ganton's career, when he came home and told her with pride all he was doing, she, too, was interested. But soon things got beyond her comprehension; so long as he had a little shop of his own and just bought and sold, she could understand it all, but when he went out to the Yards and laid the foundation of his vast business, and figures ran up into the thousands, then into hundreds of thousands, then into millions, she could not grasp it all, and gave up trying. When after a time he came home at night with bundles of letters and papers and pored over them until exhaustion followed, creeping into bed only to rise with the sun and hurry off to the Yards, she began to feel that

John Ganton, Jr.

something had gone out of their lives, and that they would never again be just the same to each other. Many a time of a Sunday evening, when there was a lull in the mad rush of business, she timidly said: "John, I wish we had n't so much money. I wish we were back over the little shop, where I could hear you working all day long, and at night we talked things over and made our plans. Oh, John, what good is all this money!"

The first time he smiled and patted her hand gently and tried to explain. After a while he became irritable and cut her short with "Women don't understand these things," so she ceased to ask. Thereafter he went his way more and more absorbed in business, and she went hers very quietly about the big brownstone house where they lived, and among the sick and the poor, in hospital and hovel, trying to do some good with the money which seemed so useless, and yet continued to flow in such abundance from mysterious and magic sources. She did not dare spend it on herself, that would be a sin, just as much of a sin as if the money were stolen; therefore she must give it away, and the task seemed never-ending and hopeless — the more she gave the more she had. Would that stream of gold never end? she often asked herself; would it end only with the ending of the stream of blood at the Yards?

It had not occurred to John Ganton that his son might wish to come home, or that the mother might like to see her boy before he sailed to be gone a year or longer. So far as he was concerned, there was no necessity for John to come to Chicago. Full instructions could be mailed, and the sooner the boy got to work the better,—that was John

Ganton & Co

Ganton's notion. Before writing he called Browning into the little private office.

"Who 's in charge of the Liverpool office now?"

"McMasters; King is in London on special work, you know."

"Yes, yes; h'm, h'm." Ganton thought a moment.

"What sort of a fellow is McMasters?"

"A hard worker, very methodical."

"I am going to send John over there for a year."

"What!—to Liverpool?" Browning exclaimed in surprise.

"Yes, to Liverpool. I don't see anything very queer in that," the old man replied impatiently.

"Is that the place for him? Will he get on there?"

Browning could not help asking by way of protest.

"No, he won't get on there,—he would n't get on anywhere; but I propose to give him his chance. Then if he wants to go back to his books he can, for all I care."

Browning was on the point of asking whether John would not do better at home, in the Chicago office, but he could see the old man's mind was made up, and he kept quiet.

"Write McMasters to put him at work; to put him through the mill. We'll see if we can't get some of these fool notions out of his head. Tell McMasters to give him so much to do that he won't have time to think of anything else. To think, Browning, a boy of mine should want to be a doddering fool of a professor, or something of that kind! I'll give him his chance, and then if he don't take it he can go to the devil, for all I care."

The old man's tone, more than his words, betrayed the disappointment he felt.

John Ganton, Jr.

Young John would have liked to go home; he had much of his mother's tenderness of heart. Now that he was going away for a year without seeing her, a feeling of homesickness crept over him, and he poured out his heart in a letter he wrote her, a letter she read and reread through the tears that filled her tired eyes.

CHAPTER V

A WIRELESS MESSAGE

ALTHOUGH the season for transatlantic travel was at its height and the ship had been sold out for several weeks, he found at the New York office a cabin *de luxe* reserved for him. The influence of Ganton & Co. was such that at the eleventh hour any one connected with the great concern could command the best on board; not that more was paid for the favor; as a matter of fact nothing at all was paid,—an illustration of the power of freight, the power which secured passes, concessions, and rebates from railroads and steamship companies.

To the manager of the New York office young John Ganton said,

“I should much prefer, Mr. Sanford, a cabin down below, so I could travel quite unknown.”

Mr. Sanford smiled indulgently; he knew John’s peculiarities.

“I fear it will be quite impossible. The ship was sold out, and only an application from headquarters for a member of the firm—I suppose you are a member now—secured the accommodation. They offered me the captain’s room, but I recalled your experience of two or three summers ago, and declined, so they made some changes and assigned you this room. I do not see how we could very well decline it without offence. In fact, they would be quite apt to think we did not wish to accept favors, and would be suspicious.

A Wireless Message

As our rebates are very satisfactory, most satisfactory, I think we should show our appreciation by letting them have their own way."

"But I do not see why I should sacrifice my comfort simply because the rebates are satisfactory," said John, with some impatience.

"You are now connected with Ganton & Co., and no longer a private individual; and as such you will have to make some sacrifices; most young men would not consider it a hardship to cross in a cabin *de luxe*."

"Well, I consider it a ridiculous display and a waste of money."

"But it costs us nothing," Sanford hastened to say.

"So much the worse. Every one will know I am traveling free because I'm connected with Ganton & Co. I do not like it at all, Mr. Sanford, and I wish you would make a change."

The tone of the young man was sharp and peremptory, and Hart Sanford looked perplexed. He did not wish to offend John, he did not wish to offend any one who might in time occupy a superior position; but above all he did not care to offend old John Ganton, for that would be disastrous.

"I'd do anything I could, you may be sure," he said hesitatingly, "but your father wired us to do as we have done. In fact, the agent of the steamship company in Chicago arranged the matter with your father himself; you are booked as a representative of the company, and the officers of the ship have been instructed to give you every attention — you know your father has his own ideas about maintaining the prestige of Ganton & Co., and they are very positive."

John knew this only too well. His father's aggressive

Ganton & Co.

business methods were distasteful to him; everywhere he went in Europe as well as America the firm name, GANTON & Co., confronted him, as a brand on soap, tallow, lard, oleomargarine, glue, fertilizers, dried, smoked, and tinned meats, soups, beef extracts, health foods, chemicals, perfumes,—products and by-products in almost endless varieties. GANTON & Co. everywhere! The great sign was on streets, stores, warehouses, factories, cars, ships, along highways, in fields, on hillsides and mountains, on the roofs of houses, on the sides of barns, along fences and walls. Everywhere GANTON & Co., until he sometimes felt as if the world were staring at him, as at an animated advertisement.

Now, more than ever, did he feel himself a factor in the display of the business. He felt as if his individuality were slipping away from him; as Sanford made plain his powerlessness in so simple a matter as choosing a stateroom on a steamer, this feeling of helplessness increased.

What could he do? What could any one do? were some of the thoughts which flitted through his mind. Though he should change his name and fly to some remote corner of the earth, he would surely be discovered. For that matter, where could he find a spot beyond the long reach of GANTON & Co.? If it was part of his father's plan to have him travel as a known and duly accredited representative, how could he help himself?

For a time he sat in Sanford's private office, thinking. There was nothing to do but accept things as he found them. The mere crossing under conditions he did not like did not amount to so much, but, somehow, the ship assumed a vast importance in his mind, for it seemed as if he were now about

A Wireless Message

to choose once for all his vocation in life, to decide whether or not he should bend his neck to the yoke.

Sanford watched him curiously, half divining what was in the young man's mind. There had been times, years before, when Hart Sanford, too, had felt restless under the pressure of the organization of which he was now a useful member. He had once cherished notions of his own — not ideals, but very positive notions — concerning business and business methods. One by one these notions had been absorbed so far as useful, dissipated so far as useless, by the great organization, until he came to have no notions at all, but simply worked as a human machine. He did not understand John, but he knew he had queer ideas that must be taken out of him, and a more tractable disposition substituted. The process of elimination and substitution would not be pleasant, and in his heart he had a feeling of sympathy. It was Sanford's lot to deal with many a young man fresh from college. John Ganton was prejudiced against college graduates. He often said:

“Young men who begin life at twenty-four are office boys at fifty; you have to catch a boy early to make a man of him”; and he seldom allowed a college man to enter either the Yards or the Chicago office. In the East it was different; college men were so numerous they had to be taken into various subordinate positions. It therefore fell to the lot of the managers of the Eastern branches to break them in, and Hart Sanford knew from many an unpleasant experience how hard it was to knock the ideals, nearly all vague and visionary, out of a young man fresh from contact with the world of unreality, and make of him a hewer of wood and drawer of water,— a two-legged beast of

burden. But it had to be done, else business would come to a standstill.

"He has the right stuff in him," he muttered to himself as John left the office, "he has the right stuff in him. I should not be surprised —" and Hart Sanford whistled softly and looked at the ceiling without finishing the sentence, for at that moment one of his salesmen entered, the keenest man connected with the New York branch.

"Did you see the young man who just went out?" asked Sanford carelessly, at the same time eying the other closely.

"Yes. Why? Who is he?"

"How did he strike you?"

"U'mm — so-so — mind of his own — bull-doggy about the jaw. Why? Is he looking for a place?"

"No — or rather yes —"

"No good as a salesman, I should say — might make a good manager — ha-ha!"

"That's no joke. That young fellow is John Ganton, Jr."

"Whew! You don't say so. Well, there is something of the old man in him, and no mistake."

"That's how he strikes me," Sanford remarked thoughtfully.

The next morning as John Ganton, Jr., walked slowly down the long covered pier, he watched the people rushing to and fro, the porters, stewards, messenger boys, all excitement and confusion, shouting and noise, and every one acting as if the boat were leaving the next moment. He was in no hurry — he never did hurry. It was a peculiarity of his that excitement in others had the reverse effect on him, and he was never so self-possessed as when others lost their heads. His father had once noted that unusual trait when they were

A Wireless Message

on a street car as it was struck by a locomotive at a crossing and several injured, one or two quite seriously. Young John, then only fifteen, was neither frightened nor excited, but so coolly tried to help the passengers out that his father afterward said approvingly:

"You 'll manage men all right, my boy; the winner is the man who plays ball when the rest get rattled."

In his cabin he found a telegram of hearty good wishes from his brother, and an affectionate letter in his mother's cramped and labored handwriting, in which she said: "I am afraid your father is disappointed in Will. Poor boy, he does not like to stay out at the Yards these hot days. I wish he had something to do in the office down town but your father won't hear of a change. I don't know what it will all come to, I am sure, but your father gets very angry and I am afraid to say anything. I hope, John, you won't disappoint your father too. Do try and please him and come back soon. Will is out so much evenings that this big house is very lonely. If Will would only marry some good wife and settle down, how happy I should be! I hear he goes a good deal with one of the Keating girls,— you remember the Keatings. May and her sister, Mrs. Jack Wilton, are much talked about, and your father is down on the family. I am sure I don't know how it will all turn out. Your father is more wrapped up in business than ever, and I see very little of him. So many strange men come here to the house that he works as hard at home as in the office. There is more to live for than money; I wish we did not have so much; it frightens me. I hope and pray, my dear boy, you will care more for other things."

John smiled sadly as he read his mother's anxious forebodings,— fears and hopes she never failed to repeat in her

Ganton & Co.

letters. Dear, sweet little woman, she had no thought in life but the happiness of others. Her view might not be broad, but it embraced no selfish aim.

The cabin *de luxe*, with its profusion of clumsy wood-carving, stucco ornaments, gilding, startling silk brocades, and tufted furniture, was more distasteful than ever; the smirking steward was already at the door forcing his services in anticipation of the liberal tip he expected at the end of the voyage; curious travellers of both sexes going through the narrow passageway half paused at the open door to wonder what celebrity occupied so gorgeous a suite of rooms; he was already paying the penalty of the notoriety thrust upon him.

The corresponding suite at the other end of the passageway was occupied by a New York banker and his wife. They were travelling with a valet, two maids, and a poodle — one maid cared for the dog. To get their rooms settled required the services of all their retainers, several stewards, and a stewardess; and it was no part of the banker's plan to conceal the fact he had bought the best the ship afforded. When he met John in the passageway, he held out his hand and said in a loud voice:

"This is Mr. Ganton, of Ganton & Co., I presume. I know your father; in fact, he does considerable business with us. The agents told me you would be aboard. Permit me to introduce myself, Jarvis Townsend of Townsend Brothers. We shall see more of each other; Mrs. Townsend will be so glad to meet you," and hardly waiting for a reply to his breezy salutation, Jarvis Townsend hurried away to get off some telegrams. John wondered if every man on board who had ever heard of Ganton & Co. or used any of the

A Wireless Message

company's by-products would feel free to greet him and claim an acquaintance.

A few hours later the ship was composing itself for the voyage. Sailors moved about silently, making things snug and tidy. Among the passengers smart jackets and hats had been exchanged for less perishable and more comfortable wraps and millinery, — a transformation becoming to some, fatal to most, women. Take it all in all, masculine man is the better-looking animal on the wing, his outward apparel lending itself more gracefully to the nomadic life, a slouchy suit becoming him well.

After luncheon Ganton was seated in a corner of the smoking-room trying to read a paper which he had thrust in his pocket as he came on board. He did not smoke; had never acquired the habit. That it was social and a mark of good-fellowship did not appeal to him.

Two men seated themselves on the opposite side of the small table, ordering coffee with their cigars. John knew one was the Austrian Ambassador at Washington.

After a desultory conversation the companion of the Ambassador asked:

"And why are you crossing now, Count? I thought you were home only a few months ago."

"So I was; to tell the truth, I am getting away from some unpleasant negotiations."

"Indeed, what 's the trouble now?"

"Since we are well under way and there is no reason for further secrecy, I'll say that the fact is, to-morrow my government is promulgating certain orders regarding the inspection of American meats which will pretty effectually shut American pork out of Austria." There was a perceptible ring

Ganton & Co.

of exultation in the Ambassador's voice which betrayed his satisfaction, and he spoke so loudly it was quite apparent that he was willing John or any other American should hear of the action of his government.

"But why do you leave Washington at such a time?"

"In order that —" the Ambassador hesitated; diplomatic reasons are diplomatic secrets, not to be disclosed, therefore he continued: "Oh, for a brief rest! Meanwhile the negotiations sure to follow will be carried on at Vienna through the American Ambassador — convenient for us, — I should say for both parties," and the Ambassador smiled as all ambassadors smile when they think they have achieved one of the petty advantages which constitute the triumphs of modern diplomacy.

Without a moment's hesitation, and scarcely knowing what impelled him, John rose from his seat and made his way directly to the second-cabin deck, where he found the operator of the wireless system just leaving his instruments. Giving his name, he asked,

"Are you still in touch with land?"

"Just exchanged the last word."

"Can't you send a short message?"

"I doubt it, Mr. Ganton, but I can try. Give me your message in as few words as possible," and he hastily adjusted his transmitter until the heavy, hoarse buzz of the long spark was again heard as he signalled the shore. After several attempts, there was an answer. Meanwhile John had quickly pencilled the following:

GANTON, Chicago:

Austria excludes American pork to-morrow.

JOHN.

A Wireless Message

"Please ask shore to repeat that, so we may be sure," he requested.

After many repetitions of letters and words the operator transmitted the message, but communication became more and more difficult, and it was a good half-hour before he secured a repetition.

John thanked the operator for his trouble and asked, "What are the charges?"

"We are taking no general business this trip, and therefore have no tariff yet; I could not have sent the message if the captain had not told me to send anything you wished."

Leaving a gold piece on the little table which held the instruments, John returned to his book and seat in the smoking-room, giving the incident no further thought; in fact, he erased it from his mind almost as completely as if it had not occurred.

The Ambassador and his companion had finished their coffee, and disappeared.

It was just fifteen minutes before two, allowing for the difference in time, when Browning hurriedly entered the private office and handed old John Ganton the despatch.

"It does not seem possible. Where could John get such information? What shall we do about it?"

"Do?" exclaimed the old man as he glanced at the despatch, and without a moment's hesitation, "Sell! Is Parker on the floor?"

"Yes."

"Put him on my 'phone."

In a moment Parker, the suave and silent representative of Ganton & Co. on the Board of Trade, was at the private

Ganton & Co.

telephone, and in a few words the old man ordered him to sell not only everything Ganton & Co. dealt in, but the entire list, and give the market all it would stand for future delivery. 'Place a few buying orders among our own brokers, and also with the Union, International, and Borlan brokers, so there will be an appearance of good buying; let the speculative crowd do the selling; be careful, time is short.'

Turning to Browning, he said sharply:

"Have the New York office send over the ticker a rumor from Washington that Austria has adopted a more liberal policy regarding American meats; also tell Sanford to see that some large buying orders at prices just below the market are sent in here at once by strong New York brokers with foreign connections; in the turmoil we will unload what we have, and go short to the limit of the market's capacity. Give me the New York wire; stocks will go off a point or two to-morrow."

It was ten minutes of two in Chicago, of three in New York, when John Ganton finished giving his orders; at two o'clock he was in close conference with the president of the Central Railway, devising a schedule of switching and demurrage charges whereby Ganton & Co. would secure indirectly a rebate on all shipments. The transactions on the Board quite passed out of his mind; he gave them no further thought until later in the day he read on the financial page of the *Evening Star*:

"The provision market was lifeless until the closing hour of the session, when it was suddenly galvanized into a state of feverish activity. On rumors from Washington that the Austrian government had taken favorable action regarding the inspection of American meat, trading was heavy.

A Wireless Message

Apparently Ganton & Co., the International, the Union, and Borlan Bros. were buyers; the speculative crowd were large sellers. The singular feature of the trading was that notwithstanding the favorable rumors from Washington and the buying by the big packers, the market closed weak; wheat and corn were off, pork closed 5 @ $12\frac{1}{2}$ c, lard $2\frac{1}{2}$ @ $7\frac{1}{2}$ c, and ribs 5 @ $7\frac{1}{2}$ c lower for the day; this caused an old trader to remark when the flurry was over, 'It looks as if somebody's been unloading on the boys.'"

The next morning when John Ganton arrived at his office, he said to Browning with a smile of satisfaction,

"I guess the International, Union, and Borlans must have bought some of the stuff yesterday."

"As near as I can gather they took on most of it, with the room traders at their heels. We are short a big line, and if John has given us the wrong tip we stand to lose considerable money."

"The boy is not mistaken," exclaimed Ganton, impatiently. "He may be a fool in most things, but when he says a thing it goes."

"But where could he have got —" Browning was urging doubtfully.

"Where! Who cares where? If you did not stop to think, Browning, you would be one of the greatest traders in Chicago; to get to the top in this world a man must think and act sy-mul-taneously." That was a favorite maxim with John Ganton: "A man must think and act sy-mul-taneously."

"There are plenty of men," he went on, "in the world who act without thinking, and a lot who think without acting, but there are mighty few who think and act sy-mul-taneously, — and they are near the top."

Ganton & Co.

"There's no confirmation of John's report in the morning papers," Browning said.

"Did n't expect it. They go to press too early. But it's now afternoon in Vienna, and we ought to hear something soon."

At nine o'clock all the big packers had private despatches announcing the new orders virtually excluding American pork and pork products from Austria. The papers issued extras, and all was excitement on the Street.

John Ganton was reading the cablegrams spread on his desk when Allan Borlan rushed in unannounced.

"Why, Allan, good-morning. What's the trouble now?"

"Have n't you heard the news from Vienna?" asked Allan, breathless with excitement.

"Just looking over the despatches; it seems they do not want our pork."

"What are we going to do about it?"

"Kill pigs," was the terse response.

"Yes; but what are we going to do about the Austrian market?"

"Sell pork."

"How can we, with their unreasonable and arbitrary regulations?"

"Inspection, my boy, is a question of inspectors; inspectors is a question of money," was the bland answer.

"I don't understand you, Mr. Ganton," and Allan Borlan looked puzzled, "if you mean we are to bribe —"

"No one 'bribes,' nowadays, it is simply a matter of fair compensation for services performed. No one expects inspectors to work for the paltry salaries paid by their govern-

A Wireless Message

ments,— we must all chip in a little.” John Ganton leaned back in his chair and eyed the young man’s perplexity with an amused expression.

“I cannot consent that our firm —” Borlan was proceeding with some hesitation.

“There are some things, Allan, as I said to you the other day, which you’d better leave to your brothers. I like you too well to see you make a fool of yourself.” The old man’s voice was rough but kindly, for there was something about Allan Borlan he liked, in spite of the latter’s “fool notions,” as he called them.

“We bought pretty heavily yesterday,” said Borlan ruefully. “I suppose you did also, Mr. Ganton.”

“No, we sold everything we had, and, I am afraid, a leetle more.”

Borlan looked up in amazement. “Why, I thought your people were buyers.”

“Just enough to keep the boys guessing.”

“Did you know —”

“It’s our business to know.”

“But the rumors from Washington —”

“Are seldom reliable — unless well paid for.”

Allan Borlan left the small, dingy private office profoundly impressed with the sagacity of John Ganton. When he repeated the substance of the conversation to one of his brothers the only comment was:

“So the old man has fooled us all again, and wants us to know it. There is n’t his equal in the country, hang him!”

That morning the provision market went all to pieces, with the grain market weak in sympathy. Many a trader was closed out, and three small brokerage concerns went to

Ganton & Co.

the wall. Indeed, it was so near to a panic that only the buying of Ganton & Co. to cover their short line kept the bottom from dropping out of everything.

"An illustration," John Ganton said to Browning late in the afternoon, "of the good effects of speculation. If we had not gone short yesterday, we could not have supported the market to-day, and there would have been a panic sure."

"John's despatch has netted us about four hundred thousand dollars," Browning calculated.

"Put half of it in the bank to his credit." And the old man continued dryly, "It may be the only money he'll ever make." With that the incident was closed.

When John Ganton, Jr., landed in Liverpool, MacMasters met him, and together they went to the dingy office, over the door of which was the sign, GANTON & CO. Without wasting a moment in idle conversation, he turned to the desk in the main office which had been assigned to him and began asking about the details of the business.

That night MacMasters remarked to his wife:

"For a chap without experience, he is about as keen as they make them."

CHAPTER VI

THE GREAT STRIKE

BORLAN BROS.' teamsters and firemen went out the second week in July. The strike tied up most of their plant, the engineers refusing to work with non-union firemen.

The firemen had no grievance, but went out at the request of the teamsters. In doing so they deliberately broke their contract with the employers, containing as it did a provision against sympathetic strikes.

"You see," said George Borlan, bitterly, to his brothers, "what agreements with the unions amount to. They are not worth the paper they are written on."

Allan had nothing to say. The men had violated their contract, and that was all there was to it. He was sorry, for he himself had made the agreement with the firemen only four months before. The president of the firemen's union was in the employ of Ganton & Co.; when he called out Borlan Bros.' men Allan charged him with breaking the agreement regarding sympathetic strikes.

"Agreement be damned!" he growled insolently. "The men propose to stand by the teamsters."

On the afternoon of the Tuesday preceding the strike three men were seated about a table in a small rear room in the second story of one of the old buildings on Clark Street. On the first floor was a saloon of unsavory reputation; the upstairs room was reached by a narrow stairway leading

Ganton & Co.

rom a hallway into which a side door opened from the aloon, so that persons could enter direct from the street or y way of the saloon, as discretion might dictate.

The room was Norberg's private office, an office so private, a fact, he never used it except for conferences of the most elicate nature. When he did use it he invariably came through the saloon, the proprietor of which was paid to be riendly.

The three men, Norberg, Fanning, and Scotty, were rinking beer and smoking cheap cigars, a box of which lay pen before them.

"Why does n't Ballard show up?" asked Norberg. Did n't he say he 'd be here at three o'clock?"

"Oh, he 'll come around all right. I saw him this morn- ing; he said he was going out to the Yards first."

"What for?" Norberg looked up suspiciously.

"To see some of the boys, and make sure the thing can be andled."

"To see some of the boys '!" exclaimed Norberg. "Look ere, Fanning, how many are in this thing? I thought you ree were going to handle it."

"Thought so myself, but this idea of letting Borlan's men o out two weeks in advance of the others is a new kink, and we don't look out for two or three of their fellows it can't e done."

"That 's all right," said Norberg, warmly, "but I don't ropose to buy up every slippery agitator in the Yards."

"You don't, eh?" shouted Scotty, bringing his fist down o hard on the table that the glasses rattled,—“you don't, eh? Vell, I tell you you 'll pay the men we say, or we 'll strike the atire Yards and do you up at the same time."

The Great Strike

Norberg saw he had spoken too hastily. "Hold on, Scotty, don't get excited. I'm always willing to do the fair thing, but," he added slowly, "the fewer there are the bigger each man's share; there's no use dividing up a good thing."

The argument went home to Scotty and Fanning, and they both expressed themselves strongly against taking in a crowd. They were proceeding to discuss figures when there was a light rap on the door, and Norberg let Ballard in. He was a man of medium height, rather slender, with very dark hair, beard, and mustache; and apparently not over thirty-five years of age. He was not only younger than his two associates, but in dress and general appearance far superior to either of them. As he seated himself directly opposite Norberg, the latter offered him a glass of beer, which he pushed to one side.

"You two fellows have had too much beer already," he said to Fanning and Scotty. "Why can't you let booze alone when there's business on hand?"

"Do you mean to say we're drunk?" flared up Scotty.

"Not drunk, but so near it you're of no use," he answered bluntly. "It is all arranged," he said, turning to Norberg. "Borlan's men will be ordered out any day we name, but it will be hard work keeping them idle with the others at work. The men themselves don't want to go out, and if it were left to a vote of the locals they would vote ten to one against a strike at this time."

"How are you going to manage it?" asked Norberg anxiously.

"Hold the meeting down town and pack it,—there's no trouble about that. The difficulty will be in keeping the men

in line when once out, and to do that we must take five of the boys out there into camp."

"For how much?" This time Fanning and Scotty as well as Norberg looked anxious.

"A thousand dollars to one, five hundred to each of the others, three thousand in all. In addition to that," continued Ballard, methodically, "we must have fifteen thousand dollars for our own secret service fund."

"What!" exclaimed Norberg, "five thousand dollars apiece —"

"Not so loud, Norberg! I did not say, 'Five thousand dollars apiece,' I said fifteen thousand dollars for our secret service fund. Not a cent less will do."

Ballard's tone was firm, and Norberg could see he meant exactly what he said. "When do you want the money?" he muttered at last.

"To-morrow morning at ten-thirty; we will meet here. See that you have the currency."

"Look here, Ballard," Norberg exclaimed suspiciously, "you and I have never done business together before. How do I know the goods will be delivered?"

"My word for it, that's all," was Ballard's cool response.

"Well, just suppose you take my word for it and get your pay afterwards. That's the way I've always done business. Fanning and Scotty can tell you my word goes."

"So does mine. Some day your employers may take the 'high moral' and go back on you, Norberg, and we would get left; I've had one such experience. Cash in advance, is my motto,— to-morrow at ten-thirty, eighteen thousand dollars."

"Look here, Ballard," Scotty asked with a sudden clear-

The Great Strike

ing up of his befuddled intelligence, "who's going to have the handling of the three thousand?"

"I am," said Ballard, positively.

"Are n't we in it?"

"Not within a thousand miles."

"Well, if we're not I'll be blowed if —"

"See here," Ballard's voice was sharp and peremptory, "do you suppose there's a man at the Yards who would let you handle his money? They know they will get every dollar that's coming to them through me, and I'll see that they do." Turning to Norberg he continued, "We'll hold the meeting next Sunday afternoon and vote to strike unless our demands are complied with; it is for you to see that the packers talk arbitration and concessions and keep things moving until they are ready for a tie-up."

"I'll take care of that," said Norberg, confidently. "We can keep the thing going in the newspapers and by conferences for a couple of weeks."

"You say you will be ready to shut down by the first of August?" Ballard asked, making a few notes on a slip of paper that he afterward stuck in his pocket.

"Perhaps a day or two earlier. I'll let you know in time, and we can break off negotiations and bring things to a head."

With that the conference broke up. Ballard went out first, going directly to the street; Fanning and Scotty went into the saloon, and lounging over the sloppy bar ordered more drinks. Norberg, waiting, sat for some time until he thought it entirely safe to sneak through the side door and out the alley entrance of the saloon. The only fear he had was of being seen by other labor leaders with whom he had done

Ganton & Co.

business in the same room, and who would be sure to suspect something was going on now.

Two days before the strike Allan Borlan sent for those of the teamsters who had been longest in the firm's employment and said to them:

"You men have been with this company a good many years, through good times and bad; most of you I have seen about here ever since I was a boy; I have ridden on the wagons with you, and you taught me how to drive; we were good friends long before I had anything to say about the business, and we are good friends still,—now tell me honestly, boys, do you want to quit and tie us up?"

The men shifted about uneasily and looked from one to another, but said nothing. No recognized leader was present, and they did not dare say anything themselves. They liked Allan Borlan, they had no grievance, they did not want to quit work, and they did not understand just why they were to quit; but it was not for them to express an opinion. Somewhere down in the city the union had voted to strike, and they had to obey.

"Tell me, men, do you want to go out?" Allan Borlan again asked.

Old Mike was the oldest teamster present. He had worked for Allan Borlan's father, so the others looked to him for an answer. The old man passed his battered and greasy felt hat from one hand to the other and said hesitatingly:

"Why, you see, Mr. Borlan,—we've nothing to say about it —"

"Do you mean to say, Mike, that you and the men who are to go out and lose their positions have nothing to say about it?" Allan Borlan exclaimed.

The Great Strike

"Not exactly — that is to say, sorr,— we hov our votes, o' coorse, but we can't attind the meetings down town very well, so it is left to others to decide,— the locals niver have much to say in the matter."

"Who does decide it?"

The old man looked at the others, puzzled and helpless. "I can't just say, Mr. Borlan, none of us has ever been to a meeting. Ballard over at the Union could tell you, sorr; he knows all about it —"

"Yes; but Ballard works for the Union Co. I have nothing to do with him. What I want to know is, whether Borlan Bros.' teamsters are going out of their own free will, or whether they are going out at the command of men who are in the employ of our competitors."

Old Mike's eyes dropped before the clear, straightforward gaze of the young man, and the old felt hat was crumpled in a manner that would have been detrimental to it six or eight years earlier, before time had inured it to ill usage.

"We've got to do as they tell us," the old man muttered.

"Even if you know you are being used by our competitors to injure us?" There was a ring of scorn in young Borlan's voice which the men felt.

"Why, all the teamsters are going out, Mr. Borlan," Mike protested.

"But not this week, or next," was the sharp response, "not until the other packers are ready. If we had contributed toward buying up your dishonest leaders you would not be called out, but because I refused to be blackmailed, they propose to tie us up.

"See here," he went on energetically, "you are led about like a lot of sheep by men who sell you out at every turn.

Ganton & Co.

Look at Ballard at the Union, at Fanning and Scotty over at Ganton's. Do they work? Not two days a week. How do they manage to hold such easy jobs? Because they are useful, because they control your organization, because they can be bought. If we had put Scotty on our pay-roll ten days ago, you would not be called out. If we had chipped in five thousand dollars, you would not be called out. As it is, we are to suffer.

"Why, your leaders will play into the hands of our competitors, and there will be no tie-up of the other plants until the companies are ready. They will run till the first of August, until they have large stocks on hand, and then the men will be called out,—that's the programme. What I want to know is, whether you men who have been with us all these years are going to let yourselves be traded in like cattle, and leave us simply because you are ordered to by leaders who are in the pay of our competitors!" The eyes of the young man flashed, his tone was sharp and ringing, he had risen to his feet and stood facing the men only a few feet from them. In a dim way they felt the truth of all he said, they knew that somehow they were made the tools of others; but the machinery of it all was far beyond their dull comprehension; all they understood clearly was that if they disobeyed orders they would be fined heavily, or have their cards taken away, which would mean no work at any of the plants.

"That may all be, Mr. Borlan," said old Mike, slowly, 'we've nothing to do with these things. We've got to do as we're told. We'd like to stay with you, sorr, but we must do as we're told or lose our cards.'

"Then quit the unions," Allan interrupted warmly. 'We'll take care of you.'

The Great Strike

The old man shook his head doubtfully. "Ye could n't do it, Mr. Borlan. All the men would go out; we could n't work in the Yards at all if we were n't union men; we must do as we 're ordered," he repeated mechanically.

"And you will go out?"

"We can't help ourselves, Mr. Borlan."

"Then if you do, Mike, you and the rest of you need never expect to work for Borlan Bros. again. You worked for my father when I was a child, you have worked for us as long as I can remember, I expected you to stay with us as long as you cared to drive a team; but if you go out now, you and every man of you leave us for good."

The young man's voice had lost its defiant ring, there was even a slight tremor as he uttered the last words; the men looked down at the floor, and old Mike cleared his throat with an effort as he said in a hopeless sort of a tone:

"I suppose it can't be helped, Mr. Borlan. Perhaps ye 'll take us back."

"Never!" was the firm response, and the men filed out.

It was only by threat of withdrawing from the company that Allan Borlan had persuaded his brothers to let him handle this strike; they wished to join the other packers in putting up what money was needed to control the situation, but he had absolutely refused to permit a dollar of the company's money to be used in that way. Further, he had exacted a promise from his brothers that they individually would not contribute, but would let events take their course.

By working large forces day and night he had placed the company in fairly good shape for a tie-up; but with the best he could do, some loss and great inconvenience could not be avoided. If he could have kept running until the first of

Ganton & Co.

the month he would have been in position to reap his share of the advantages expected by his competitors.

As Allan Borlan was leaving the Yards late that afternoon to take the car, a man with a dark beard and mustache accosted him,

"You are Mr. Borlan?"

"Yes." Allan looked at the man curiously.

"I am Ballard of the Teamsters' Committee."

"I thought so."

"I understand you called in some of your men to-day and told them we were selling them out."

"I did."

"Well, I would advise you to keep mum on that line."

"And if I do not?"

"You might get hurt,—that's all." Ballard met the look of the young man without flinching.

"For you and your threats I do not care a rap; you and your associates are a pack of cowards, who hire thugs to do the work you do not dare do yourselves; you are a set of black-mailers, and you know it." Allan was warmed up, and nothing would have pleased him better than to have the man assail him then and there; but Ballard only laughed and said sneeringly:

"Oh, you may talk to me as much as you please. I'm used to it, and it does you good to let off steam — you all pay in the end; but," and once more he grew threatening, "I warn you good and fair against talking to the men. Take my word for it, you will be better off if you keep your mouth shut. You are young at the business, and have things to learn." With that the man walked off.

CHAPTER VII

NOT A CENT FOR TRIBUTE

THAT night when Allan Borlan met his two brothers at the home of the oldest in Michigan Avenue, the discussion of the situation was long, earnest, and at times heated.

"You say you won't pay a cent!" exclaimed George Borlan. "I tell you it is the only way this labor situation can be handled, and every one knows it. How do you suppose the Rapid Construction Company is putting up our new warehouse without strikes? It's taking care of the walking delegates and the business agents. That is the secret of their success. There's not a building contractor in the city who does not use money to keep the unions in line."

"And how about the men who lose time and wages, who stand by their unions loyally, who pay their assessments and support leaders that sell them out?" asked Allan, bitterly.

"Who cares for the men?" his brother answered hotly. "If they permit themselves to be handled like so many hogs, that is their lookout. It is not our fault that their leaders are dishonest."

"But it is if we bribe them," interrupted Allan.

"No; the men are dishonest before we have a chance to bribe them. They are looking for the bribe before it is offered. They come with their hands open. They are dishonest when chosen as leaders, and are chosen because they

are dishonest. Talk about honesty! I tell you it is easier for the rich man to get into the kingdom of heaven than for an honest man to be elected head of one of the labor organizations."

"But there are honest men among them."

"How many? Name three. Now and then there is one who is said to be honest and disinterested,—though no one knows whether he really is or not,—but honesty in union management is so rare that to have the reputation for being honest is sufficient to make a man conspicuous above all the others. They call him 'Honest John,' or 'Honest Tom.' Just as Kelly used to be called 'Honest John Kelly' when he ran Tammany Hall,—simply because he kept his word with his followers, and was honest as compared with some of the notorious rascals who preceded him. When honesty becomes a conspicuous virtue in an organization the organization is rotten."

Allan Borlan could not help acknowledging the force of what his brother said. He knew that petty bribery of walking delegates and business agents was the rule in all the building trades, and that in one form or another the agents of the unions were taken care of. Yet when it came to their own men he could not tolerate seeing them betrayed, and he rebelled against the use of money. He had some ideals left over from school and college, he even dreamed that employers and employees should work together; but when he tried to impress these views upon his brother, the latter exclaimed:

"That 's all stuff. There was a time when employers and employees did work together in a spirit of loyal coöperation, but times have changed. In the old days the union used to be along perpendicular lines, now it is along horizontal.

Not a Cent for Tribute

Once every plant was solidly united from top to bottom, but now-a-days it is different. Our firemen are no longer united with our engineers, who are their natural allies, but with the firemen of our competitors who are their industrial rivals; our engineers are united with the engineers of other concerns, and so are our butchers, our teamsters, and every grade of employees. Sympathies no longer permeate the mass from the bottom up, and weld employers and employees together, but flow laterally in the futile endeavor to weld strangers and competitors together. That is the trouble with the labor situation to-day; no industrial concern is a unit composed of men coöperating sympathetically; but every concern is composed of so many layers of independent and jealous trades each of which is only too glad if it can assert its independence at the cost of the others and regardless of the employer. Our teamsters will stand by Ganton's teamsters sooner than by us or by the other men in our employment. They care nothing about the success or failure of Borlan Bros.; all they care about is the success or failure of the teamsters' union."

George Borlan walked up and down the long library, talking vehemently. In his way he was a student and a keen observer of conditions. He had seen the various plants at the Stockyards organized one by one, until the unions were in complete control. Then came the question of handling the new situation. Since it was no longer possible for each employer to deal with his own men, he was compelled to do the best he could with the organizations; and to the surprise of the packers the new order of things was found cheaper than the old. It was cheaper to deal with the unions than with the men. With the exception of an outbreak now and then, when the men made a fuss and insisted upon some

Ganton & Co.

consideration, all difficulties could be adjusted by the use of comparatively small amounts of money shrewdly distributed.

By purchasing the walking delegate or business agent, a task-master was secured more powerful and about as merciless as the traditional slave-driver; and he ordered the men about as no foreman ever dared.

"Things have changed since father founded this business," George Borlan continued earnestly; "and the trouble is, you do not realize it, Allan. He used to look out for his men. When they were sick he helped them, when they were injured he cared for them, and when they were old he found easy places for them,— he treated them like men and they were loyal to him, which simply means they were loyal to the business they helped him build up. Now all is different. If men are sick they are laid off and lose their time, if they are hurt an insurance company steps into our shoes and either settles with them or fights them if they sue for damages. We have nothing more to do with their welfare, if they are sick, injured, or old we have no use for them,— and why should we bother about them? They have their own organizations to which they have transferred their loyalty, the unions stand between them and us, and contract with us for so many able-bodied slaves at so much per hour per head. Under the contract we are under no obligation to look after the sick and decrepit, for the union will furnish us sound animals in their places. As a matter of dollars and cents we should be ahead if there were a horse union doing business on the same cash basis; as it is, we are obliged to treat our horses almost as well as we used to treat our men."

"But, George, unionism has come to stay," Allan interrupted in a tone of protest.

Not a Cent for Tribute

"Yes; and for my part I am glad of it," his brother almost shouted. "The unions have fixed the hours of work and the wages, and we are entitled to the work of a strong man for eight hours a day for our money. We can lay off the sick and discharge the old. Pretty soon no industry will keep a man after he is turned forty, and why should we? The unions are run by the young and able-bodied in the interest of the young and able-bodied, they encourage the employment of their active members, and they have no use for the old man with a family, since he is naturally a conservative, and therefore instinctively opposed to radicalism, which is at the basis of unionism. It is money in our pockets to deal with unions on a business basis, and if you would only listen to reason and do as the other packers do we could control the labor situation more easily than ever before." George Borlan's tone expressed the irritation he felt because his brother would not follow his advice.

"It's no use, George," Allan said stubbornly. "I will not pay those fellows a cent. Why, one of them, Ballard, threatened me to-night as I left the Yards."

George Borlan turned in surprise as Allan told him what Ballard had said.

"He is in a position to make that threat good, Allan; he is the most dangerous of the lot. Do you carry a pistol?"

"No, never," and Allan laughed at the idea.

"Well, you ought to; you must take no chances. Why, those fellows control a gang of sluggers who would just as soon assault you as they would a 'scab.' "

"I'm not afraid," was the careless response; "they're a pack of cowards."

"Therefore they're the more dangerous; the professional

Ganton & Co.

slugger takes no chances, and he gives none. I want you to be careful, Allan. You don't understand the Yards yet. Why, some of those foreigners out there don't know they are living in America, and many of them would knife a man as quickly as if they were in their own God-forsaken countries."

Allan laughed at his brother's anxiety. He could not conceive there could be any real danger, and he looked upon Ballard's threats as idle.

For some time longer the brothers discussed the situation; finally Allan said he would see John Ganton the first thing in the morning, and ask him once more if he would not stand with them in resisting the demands of the labor leaders.

"It's no use, I can tell you that," said George Borlan; "the old man has been through the mill too many times. He fights when he feels like it, but knows when it is best to pay,—and just now it is cheaper to pay."

"It is never cheaper to buy up professional blackmailers," said Allan, warmly; "these fellows are leeches. Give them a taste of blood and in time they will drain you dry."

"But it's only a matter of twenty or thirty thousand dollars now,—a mere bagatelle divided amongst us all. Why, we'll lose more than that the first week of the strike."

"It's only twenty or thirty thousand now, but it will be that much more in a month from now to another gang, and so on without end. Aside from the principle involved I am opposed to paying a cent on grounds of economy."

"Have your own way, then," his brother said wearily; "but when you have been at the Yards as long as I have, you will find there are some things you can't control to suit your own fancy, and the labor situation is one of them. I do not like paying money to these rascals any better than you, but

Not a Cent for Tribute

it can't be helped; besides, it's my opinion that buying the leaders will in the end disintegrate the whole labor movement. It breeds distrust and dissension, it keeps them at war among themselves, and pretty soon the men will learn they are being bought and sold, and they will get ugly. Why, already it is comparatively easy to play one union against another by buying up first one crowd and then another. As soon as it is rumored that there's some money in sight there is a scramble to get it. It is n't necessary to buy all the unions at any one time. They don't trust each other, for each organization knows the other is for sale, and it is a question which crowd of insiders gets hold of the money first."

"Well, it's a poor policy in the long run," Allan Borlan insisted.

"That may be; but I don't see it. Others do it, and if we expect to live we must. The man who tries to run his business on a higher plane than his competitor will make a failure of it."

"There is no harm trying," urged Allan, quietly.

"If you object to paying these labor leaders, why don't you object to the secret arrangements we have with every railroad running into Chicago? Why don't you object to the way we handle our assessments and taxes? Why don't you object to what we pay the political heelers and the inspectors?" and George shook his finger at his brother, punctuating every word with a gesture. So the discussion came to an end.

As Allan Borlan walked back to his own home that night he could not help thinking both his brothers had greatly changed in the last few years, and he wondered if it was possible the same apparently relentless conditions would

Ganton & Co.

work a similar change in him, whether he, too, would be obliged to swim with the current or go to the bottom.

John Ganton was in an irritable frame of mind when Allan Borlan called to see him. Will had not been home at all the night before. It was not that his being away was anything new, but at this particular time, with a strike brewing and each department being pushed to its uttermost, John Ganton wanted every man about him in his place.

"I tell you," he said to Browning, "if he does n't attend to business better, I'll ship him to Kansas City, where the work is n't quite so pleasant and there are n't so many clubs."

"He'll turn up all right," was Browning's invariable response to these outbursts. He tried to shield Will as best he could, and every man in the employment of the company did the same. Even the office-boy gave Will a hint when his father was in an unusually bad temper. They all liked the son and wished him good luck, and yet each knew that by no possibility could he ever fill the shoes of old John Ganton as the head of the great company, the one obvious truth which John Ganton would not see. He had brought Will up to take his place, and in his boy's neglect of business he saw only the indifference of youth, not incapacity; for that matter Will Ganton did not lack a certain amount of ability, but he lacked application; he was easy-going and readily diverted from the duty of the hour.

It was at this inopportune moment Allan Borlan presented himself at the door of the small private office.

"Well, what is it, young man?" the old man asked roughly, barely lifting his eyes from the papers before him.

"I came to see you about this strike, Mr. Ganton."

Not a Cent for Tribute

"You were here about it the other day, were n't you?"

"Yes; but —"

"Well, have you come to your senses and decided to let your brothers manage these matters?" The tone was harsh.

"No; we will not pay these blackmailers a penny."

"Then what are you here for? You said that the other day."

"I am here, Mr. Ganton, to see if you will not join with us in fighting them."

"No; you can fight them alone. You don't like my way, I have no use for yours; so we 'll each paddle his own canoe and see how we come out."

The old man's tone was so disagreeable Allan Borlan was disheartened, and his face showed it. He simply said, "Good-morning, Mr. Ganton," turned on his heel and went out, not even stopping to exchange a word with Browning as he looked up from his desk.

A moment later Browning was closeted in the private office going over the situation. They called up the Union Co. to see if their man Ballard could be relied upon. "Absolutely," was the immediate response. They sent for Norberg and found that every detail had been attended to, but that in order to keep the firemen and engineers in hand about fifteen thousand dollars more would be needed; for that amount they would be kept at work or ordered out in sympathy with the teamsters, as might be desired.

"Let them go out at the Borlan plant as soon as they please," said the old man, "a complete-tie-up there will do us no harm."

"Some day we shall have to fight these fellows to a finish,"

Ganton & Co.

said Browning, "we cannot go on paying them much longer, — they are getting too greedy."

"We 'll choose our own time, and then whip them to a standstill," was the grim response, and both Norberg and Browning knew that when the time did come to fight, the old man would win.

At the Yards little groups of men gathered here and there earnestly talking over the impending trouble. No one had a very clear idea what it was all about; there was talk of shorter hours, increased wages, new classifications, and so on, but hardly a man knew just what the demands were. Scotty and Fanning were appealed to for information, but they usually answered with a string of oaths which might be levelled at either the men or their employers,— quite as frequently the former as the latter.

No one dared ask Ballard any questions. He moved about like a sphinx, saying little and doing nothing in the way of work. He was on the pay-roll of the Union, but no one ever saw him doing anything; he spent most of his time down town, and was a potent factor in the central organization. Every labor leader knew Ballard and stood in no little fear of him, for in his own union his word was law, and with many of the others he possessed an influence beyond that of their own officers.

Fanning and Scotty always had plenty of money, but they spent it freely and were popular; while Ballard had more money, but he saved it and was unpopular. No one knew whence he came; there were rumors he had "served time" somewhere out West for killing a man, but the rumors could not be traced to responsible sources, nor could they be true, for it was generally known that he did not carry a pistol or

Not a Cent for Tribute

weapon of any kind, and he never lost his temper or got drunk and quarrelsome like Fanning and Scotty. There was, however, a glitter about his keen black eyes that the men did not like, and it had a sobering effect upon Scotty in his most maudlin moments.

The prospect of a strike was hailed with delight by the hot-headed younger men; but most of their elders shook their heads and pointed to the fact that all the companies were carrying large stocks, that prices were low, and a tie-up would be playing into the hands of their employers by cutting down production and advancing prices.

"It 's no time to go out, b'ys," said old Mike to a little knot of men gathered near one of the doors of Borlan Bros.' team shed; "iv'ry house in th' Yarrd would loike to shut down nixt month."

"That 's about right," murmured several of the men.

"Oh-h,— we 'll show 'em," shouted a young fellow, who had driven a team less than six months; "they can't stand it more than a week."

Old Mike shook his head. "It 'll be longer than a week; those of youse who have no families can stand it, but it 's hard for us."

It was all Mike could do in the best of times to support his family, which now consisted of himself and his old wife, and a sick and nearly helpless daughter with her three little girls; the husband and father had been killed three years before on the railroad. The old man had not saved up a cent; it was with difficulty he met his rent and paid his bills, and there were times when he would get behind in spite of all he could do. To him the strike meant nothing short of disaster, and yet he dared not remain at work in defiance of the union.

CHAPTER VIII

A DINNER AT THE GOLF CLUB

LARRY DELANEY'S office consisted of two small rooms on one of the upper floors of the best building on La Salle Street; the confidential character of his business did not require large quarters on the ground floor,—“Could not afford it,” he was in the habit of modestly saying.

There was an atmosphere of economy, integrity, and secrecy about Delaney's office which inspired confidence; the rooms were decorated and furnished in the best of taste; the oak floor was stained a brown that was almost black, and covered with two or three Oriental rugs which were really old and charming in their soft and faded colors, but which were so ragged and imperfect they cost comparatively little,—Delaney often said, “Any one who pays more than ten dollars for an old rug is sure to be cheated.” The walls were a dull green,—“There are plenty of artists nowadays,” he observed, “but no painters; plenty of men who can paint pictures, but few who can paint walls.”

His furniture he had picked up in out-of-the-way places, buying dilapidated old pieces for a song and having them made serviceable without being restored.

“I would n't risk myself in one of your rickety chairs, Delaney,” a friend frankly remarked one day.

“You are quite right, my dear boy,” Delaney replied; “since antique furniture has become a fad it is folly to sit down.”

A Dinner at the Golf Club

A ticker in one corner of the small outer office and a telephone on his desk in the still smaller inner room were almost the only modern contrivances in sight.

An office-boy too dull to be observing, and too forgetful to remember names,—rare qualifications from Delaney's point of view,—was his only assistant.

While his father was closeted with Norberg and Browning arranging the details of the strike as methodically as if it were part of the regular business routine, Will Ganton was talking earnestly with Delaney in the latter's private office.

"Borlan's teamsters are going out next week," said Delaney, "and there are rumors the firemen and engineers will strike too. If they do, that means a complete tie-up; and if this thing spreads, it means a tumble in stocks."

"But it won't spread," Will Ganton urged, his face betraying his anxiety. "I know our people have the matter well in hand; I have that from one who knows."

"Who?" asked Delaney.

"I can't tell you that, but he is the man who keeps in touch with what is going on in the labor world,—I'm sure he knows."

"But what did he say?"

"He said they had the matter in hand,—that's all he would say, but that's enough, isn't it?"

"It is if the packers don't want a strike, but suppose they do?"

"Oh, I know they don't want any strike. You need n't worry about that." Will seemed very confident.

"Well, I'm not so sure," said Delaney, doubtfully. "It may be all right, but I don't like the looks of things. The

Ganton & Co.

market is off this morning, prices are very shaky, and there has been a steady selling pressure from some direction for several days, as if big interests were unloading for a drop. These troubles, whether they amount to anything or not, are sufficient to put an end to any bull movement. We shall be called upon for more margins before the day is over unless there is a sharp rally."

The two went into the outer room and looked at the ticker; Delaney ran the narrow ribbon of paper through his fingers and shook his head.

"Market opened weak, and everything we are interested in is off."

He said "we," as if he, too, ran a chance of losing, and Will Ganton felt a certain degree of comfort on that account, but Larry Delaney seldom speculated. He had learned that it is much safer to risk the money of others than one's own.

While the two were watching the ticker, a note was handed Delaney from the firm of brokers below through which he placed his New York business.

"Just as I thought," he exclaimed, "a call for additional margins,—market very unsteady."

"How much?" Will Ganton asked gloomily.

Delaney figured a moment on the back of an envelope.

"It will take at least ten thousand dollars. You see you are carrying a pretty long line; we've been buying steadily on the declines."

"I don't see how I can put it up, Larry," and the situation really seemed hopeless to him. "I have borrowed every cent I dare and my account is overdrawn. I don't see how I can raise another cent."

"And you don't want to ask your father?"

A Dinner at the Golf Club

"I would n't dare to. I have told you what he thinks of speculating."

"Yes, I know, but he goes in so heavily himself —"

"That's another thing. He has the money, and more than that, he knows what he is about. He can make or break stocks from the inside. Why, if he were short a lot of stocks, it would be like him to hurry on a strike or a panic just to break prices."

"Well, I can tell you one thing," Delaney exclaimed, as if suddenly struck with a new idea, "some big fellow has been selling nearly the entire list for the last two weeks,— no one knows who."

"I don't believe he has. Why should he want low prices with the crop outlook so good?"

"He may know more than we do about this strike business," Delaney remarked significantly.

"Well, I don't believe there will be any general tie-up," but this time the young man's voice expressed uncertainty.

"Strike or no strike, we must meet this call for margins," said Delaney, firmly.

"How can I, Larry? Where can I raise the money?" He looked so miserable Delaney was sorry for him.

"Is there no one in the Company who would help you out?"

Will thought a moment, and answered doubtfully, "I might ask Browning,— he always stands by me,— he might let me have the money."

"Try it," said Delaney, encouragingly.

"He will ask for a list of all my trades the first thing."

Delaney pulled a statement out of a pigeon-hole in his desk.

Ganton & Co.

"There you are,— in detail. Show it to him, but hurry. If the market sags much more we might be closed out. I don't like the looks of things," and Delaney once more went to the ticker, which was working steadily, indicating a very active market. "The bears are going to have their inning to-day, that's sure."

Will did not care to go to the office and run the risk of meeting his father, so he telephoned Browning to come to one of the private rooms of the bank where he kept his account. Fearing something was wrong, Browning hastened over. As Will went on to explain how much he needed ten thousand dollars immediately, Browning's face fell.

"Let me see the list of trades," he said quickly. As he looked over the statement, he pursed his lips and drew in his breath with a low whistle, as he always did when disagreeably surprised.

"You stand to lose now,— let me see," and he made some rapid calculations on a piece of paper, "not less than forty or fifty thousand dollars as the market is going this morning, and yet that is the best you can do. Call up Delaney," Browning continued rapidly and decisively, "and tell him to close the trades at once."

Will Ganton looked up in amazement: close out his trades at a loss of forty or fifty thousand dollars! Nothing was farther from his thoughts. What could Browning be thinking of?

"Why, you're crazy, Browning!" he exclaimed. "The market is bound to turn soon as this strike talk is over."

"But it won't be over," the other answered quietly.

"Do you mean to say there's going to be a general tie-up?" The young man's tone expressed his surprise.

A Dinner at the Golf Club

"I don't mean to say anything one way or the other. All I can say is, that the best thing you can do is close these trades at once."

"I 'll be dashed if I will unless you tell me there is going to be a general tie-up."

"I can't tell you that, Will," said Browning in a friendly tone; "but I can tell you this: you are trading against your father, and for every share of stock you have bought he has sold ten. I don't think you or any other man can hold out against him. That's confidential, mind you."

Will was dumfounded; so his father was in the market and on the short side for one of the big turns for which he was famous in the street. That meant a strike or something to bring prices down. Browning was right, and the best thing he could do was get out from under, so he called up Delaney and told him to close out all his trades.

"What's that?" Delaney almost shouted into the 'phone.

"Close 'em out,—quick."

"What's up?"

"Never mind,—don't know,—can't raise the money. Close 'em out, and we 'll figure up where we stand over at the Club this afternoon."

As he rang off, Will turned to Browning and asked desperately,

"Look here, Browning, can't you give me a pointer so I can recoup some of my losses?"

"Keep out of the market, Will. You have n't the money to play the game in a big way, and you can't afford to play it in a small. You know how your father feels,—what will he say when he hears of this?"

"He must n't hear of it," exclaimed Will in alarm.

Ganton & Co.

"How can he help knowing it? You have lost nearly fifty thousand dollars, and you owe the bank here over forty and are overdrawn. What are you going to do?"

"Damned if I know," was the reckless answer, and Browning knew the young man was in a desperate frame of mind.

"There is just one thing to do," he said, "and that is to make a clean breast of the whole matter to your father."

"I can't do that. He's down on me already, because I cut work yesterday and did not turn up last night. I don't care to run my head in the lion's jaw this morning."

"But he must know in the end."

"Well, not to-day, Browning; I'll go out to the Yards and slave for a few days, until it puts him in good humor. If you will speak to the bank they will carry me as long as necessary."

Browning thought a moment; then, seeing no better way, he sent for the vice-president of the bank and arranged with him to carry Will. To do this Browning became morally bound to see the debt paid, but Will did not fully realize that.

They were on the point of leaving, when Browning put his hand affectionately on the young man's arm and said,

"May I say something to you, Will?"

"Why, certainly. I guess you are entitled to read the riot act to me if any one is," and Will laughed as he turned restlessly in his chair.

"I am not going to read the riot act," said Browning, with a smile that was almost sad, "I am going to tell you a little experience of my own," he hesitated a moment, and continued. "There was a time, when I first worked for your father, when I was nearly ten thousand dollars behind;

A Dinner at the Golf Club

I had speculated and lost every dollar I had and did not know where to turn. I went to your father and told him where I stood. He made good my losses, and he did it without a word of reproach. I had lost the money in wheat at a time when he was operating heavily on the other side of the market; but I did not know this, and every one in the office thought he was buying when in reality he was selling. All he said to me was, 'Young man, I guess I've won your money; if I give it back will you promise never to speculate?' I was only too glad to make the promise. 'Very well,' he said, 'I will loan you the money. That will help keep you straight, and you can work it out.' I owe him that money yet, for he will not let me pay him; he will not even let me talk about it. However, that is neither here nor there. What I wish to say is, that I have watched the game from the inside and know that only those win who are in a position to control the market, to make or break prices. Panics are brought on for the benefit of pools; war scares, crop scares, strike scares, are all part of the machinery of speculation. Every man who has been behind the scenes knows how they are worked; the market is honest only when it is dull. You ask me for a pointer to help you recoup your losses; I might give you one, and before you could act your father or some other great man in the financial world might see fit to get on the other side of the market, and you would lose again. Men who make and break prices act quickly."

Will had never heard Browning speak with so much force, and he was greatly impressed, far more impressed than by anything his father had ever said to him; besides, there was something in Browning's own experience that appealed to him. When he left the bank he went straight to his desk in the Yards.

Ganton & Co.

That evening Will Ganton was expected to dine with Mrs. Jack and her sister at the Golf Club; these dinners had become quite a matter of course of late, and people were beginning to take it for granted that he and May Keating either were or soon would be engaged.

At the five-o'clock train he saw many men he knew; but, depressed by the disastrous events of the day, he threw himself into a vacant seat and buried his face in the evening paper to avoid the bother of conversation.

"What's the matter with Ganton?" George Axford asked of his three companions, seated a little in the rear.

"Looks as if he had been hard hit," one remarked, glancing at Will.

"They say he's in the market pretty heavily," was the comment of another.

"Well, if he is on the bear side he is all right. The market went all to pieces to-day."

"I rather think he is on the wrong side," interrupted Axford; "I know he took a flyer about a month ago. I did, myself, but I pulled out when I saw how things were going. I guess he went in deeper."

"Well, he can stand it."

"Maybe he can, and maybe he can't. The old man proposes to do all the speculating for the family, and there will be trouble if he has to make good Will's losses."

"How about May Keating? They say the old man —" Their voices dropped and the four young men put their heads together confidentially.

"Beautiful,—clever too,—no name for it,—not so clever as Mrs. Jack?—I rather think so, but in a different

A Dinner at the Golf Club

way,— make a safer wife,— Delaney —” and here the voices dropped to almost a whisper.

The entrance just then by the rear door of the three people whose names were being taken in vain interrupted the confidences, and the four young men rose hastily to offer their seats.

With a single glance Mrs. Jack had taken in the entire car and the possible combinations it afforded; she saw the vacant seat next to Will Ganton, and with the decision of a general on the field of battle she distributed her forces to the best advantage,— instead of placing her sister beside Will Ganton she sat there herself.

“Why did n’t you telephone this afternoon?” were her first words. “We did not know whether you would come to-night or not.”

“I have not had a moment’s time,” he answered apologetically, “I have been tied up all day.”

“What is the matter? Anything gone wrong?” This time she looked at him critically, and her quick eye saw that evidently something had gone very wrong.

“No — that is, not much,” he hesitated, “just a matter of business.”

“Has —” and she bit her tongue, for she was on the point of asking whether he had had trouble with his father. Somehow Mrs. Jack was haunted by the fear that Will Ganton and his father did not get on well together, and that any day there might be a rupture. The thought was not pleasant, for what did Will Ganton amount to without the millions of old John Ganton? Nothing, less than nothing, in the eyes of Mrs. Jack. She had asked Delaney, but he knew only what most people knew: that as between the two sons Will was his father’s favorite.

Ganton & Co.

Changing the form of her question, she asked as if only casually interested, "How is your father?"

"All right, I guess,— have n't seen him for a day or two," was the short response; but Mrs. Jack felt relieved, for if Will had not seen his father for a day or two the immediate trouble could not be in that direction.

"I have a surprise in store for you," and she looked at him dubiously. "Mrs. Range Salter and her daughter are to dine with us. The young lady is not out, but an exception is made as the dinner is, of course, quite informal, and I told Mrs. Salter you were to be of the party. Now, I shall place you between them, and I want you to do your best to be agreeable, for I shall have my hands full."

Will Ganton made a feeble protest. "Could n't you put the mother at the other end of the table? The girl is not half bad,— I dined with them a few weeks ago,— she 's bright, but the mother — I tell you, let Delaney look after the mother," and he brightened up at the happy suggestion.

"No; if you have the daughter, you must take the mother with her," said Mrs. Jack, sharply, a vague doubt arising in her mind about the wisdom of placing Will Ganton beside a young girl who certainly was sweet and charming, but — oh, pshaw! the thought was ridiculous.

On the Club porch Mrs. Jack found some of her guests, but Mrs. Salter and her daughter had not yet arrived. Will Ganton dropped into a chair by one of the tables and ordered a high-ball,— "good and stiff," he said to the boy. Two or three men seated at the same table accepted his invitation to "have something," and the conversation turned on the scores, actual and possible — mostly the possible — of the afternoon.

A Dinner at the Golf Club

"Bully good play," one was saying.

"Could n't do it again in a thousand years," was the response.

"Made the ninth hole in two this afternoon," said little McDuffey, one of the crack players, and he swelled up like a game bantam.

"I 'll go you a box of balls you can't do it again, and we 'll try it right now," shouted Slafter, who bet and talked as recklessly as he played, and who delighted in baiting little McDuffey.

"Done. Wait until I get my Scotch-and-soda."

"Oh, if you 're going to fill up on whiskey and soda the bet 's off. I 'm willing to bet against a Scotchman sober; but a Scotchman drunk is another proposition." Slafter laughed so loud at his own joke that all at the table joined without knowing what they were laughing at.

"What did you make it in to-day?" Will asked the man next to him by way of manifesting an interest in the current topic. He did not know the man, had never seen him before, and did not care a rap what his score was.

"Hundred and ten, but if it had not been for the long grass —"

"I say," shouted Slafter, "that will be a bully match. I 'll back his royal highness —"

At that moment the boy came with the drinks, and the identity of his royal highness remained undisclosed, likewise that of his doughty opponent.

Will Ganton drank his high-ball because he felt the need of a stimulant; the others drank as a matter of habit. With the next good fellow who seated himself at the table they would all drink again, and so on to a condition of imperfect sobriety.

Ganton & Co.

As Will left the circle Slafter was offering to bet McDuffey a box of balls a hole that he could not beat an Irishman the latter did not like. Little McDuffey's sunburnt face fired a darker red with indignation at the suggestion, and in his rage he relapsed into broad Scotch mixed with profanity, much to the delight of his tormentor.

May Keating was talking with several athletic young women. One of them, a girl whose reddish brown hair found an echoing note in the color of the Russia leather shoes beneath her short duck skirt, was just saying, vivaciously,

"I should have given him a piece of my mind if he had done that to me."

"Oh, nonsense!" exclaimed another, whose heavy eyebrows, almost meeting over her nose, gave her face a strong, almost coarse look. "Who cares nowadays what a man does, so long as he —" at that moment she noticed Will Ganton approaching, and stopped short.

"I hope," he said embarrassed, "I do not intrude."

"Oh, no!" exclaimed one.

"Not at all," said the young woman with the dark eyes and heavy eyebrows, regaining her assurance. "We were just discussing whether being drunk is any excuse for a man who kisses another man's wife."

"Why — that depends — I suppose —" The cynical coolness of the question staggered him so he could get no farther.

"Exactly," she continued, enjoying his confusion; "as Mr. Ganton says, it depends, of course, upon the degree and nature of the intoxication. If spirituous, then he is excusable from the husband's point of view, but not the

A Dinner at the Golf Club

wife's; if spiritual, then from the wife's point of view, but not the husband's. But I contend a woman would rather have the kiss drunk than miss it sober; don't you think so, Mr. Ganton?" and her laugh had an unpleasant ring which seemed to go with the heavy eyebrows and the masculine cast of her features. She was one of the brilliant young married women of the smart set, and Will Ganton dreaded her tongue. It always seemed to him she was talking either at or about some one in an uncomfortably pointed way. Moreover, she did not care what she said, and every now and then reduced a dinner-table to silence with a remark which might have challenged the attention of the police if uttered in public. She could make most men blush, and took delight in doing so, yet every hostess seemed to consider her an indispensable element in every social function.

"People cannot talk sense; they are tired of nonsense; and there is nothing but inde-cence left," she once said to a young clergyman who was vainly struggling to keep conversation within bounds.

May Keating looked bored. She did not care for young Mrs. Trelway or for her manner of talking; not that she objected particularly to her reckless allusions to things commonly supposed to be avoided in polite society, but because she did not like the woman. Possibly it was due to the fact that she was considered so very brilliant, possibly because she had the faculty of carrying men by storm, and of doing as she pleased generally,— but who can divine the hidden causes of feminine aversions? The two young women disliked each other so cordially they invariably sought one another's company.

Ganton & Co.

On account of this feeling of antipathy, Mrs. Trelway took especial delight in embarrassing Will Ganton and making him appear at a disadvantage.

"You have n't answered my question, Mr. Ganton," she insisted maliciously. "Would n't a woman rather have the kiss —"

"Really, Carrie," interrupted May Keating, indifferently, "don't you think you are in a better position to answer that question than Mr. Ganton?"

"Why, that depends, as Mr. Ganton is so fond of saying, upon the extent and variety of his experiences. We all know," she continued brutally, "that he has been drunk and sober often enough to find out, but perhaps he lacks the courage in either state." Again she laughed, this time sneeringly, and Will Ganton began to feel ill at ease and angry.

"The question is not the courage of the man," said May Keating sharply, "but the desire of the woman; and I am afraid, Carrie, you are the only one of us who can speak with authority."

"What rot!" and the heavy eyebrows drew a trifle nearer together. "That sort of hypocrisy makes life a burden; in another moment you will all be protesting you have never been kissed, and don't want to be. What do you think of these *petites demoiselles*, Mr. Ganton? Are they not charming in their *naïveté*? What a pity their fresh innocence should be subjected to the vicious atmosphere of this depraved Club, where they are so sure to hear things that will shock them; or is it possible they have come to this horrid place to be shocked?" and she poured out a stream of witty and ironical remarks which convulsed her companions. Even May Keating was amused; Will Ganton alone failed

A Dinner at the Golf Club

to see anything to laugh at, and was sure that in some way he was the butt of her wit.

As the little group separated to get ready for dinner, he stood for a few moments with May Keating.

"I can't see what you all find to laugh at in the stuff she gets off," he said by way of protest.

"Oh, she has a sharp way of putting things." The tone of the response exhibited the indifference of the young woman to anything Mrs. Trelway might say.

"Too infernally sharp to suit me,—always poking fun at some one,—I don't like her," and he went on in an injured manner as if May Keating were partly to blame for his fancied humiliation.

"She was not referring especially to you; she was ridiculing us: could n't you see that?" A slight accent of impatience could be heard in her voice; there were times when Will Ganton seemed positively dense, and that was a trait May Keating could not tolerate, for stupidity grated upon her nerves like the filing of a saw. She sometimes said to her sister, "I can't stand it,—I can't stand it; I shall fly to pieces some day,—I know I shall." Mrs. Jack always tried to sooth her by dwelling upon Will's good qualities, his un-failing good nature, his generosity and kindness of heart.

"Yes, those are the qualities that go with stupidity," she answered once, "the brilliant man is never good-natured, kind, or generous except by fits and starts. If he were he would be commonplace, and not brilliant."

It was when they were in the company of clever people that Will Ganton showed to the greatest disadvantage. He was not bright, he was not witty, and he was neither well read nor well informed. With his own companions he was

Ganton & Co.

a good fellow and well liked; in society he was considered a trifle heavy, and never, save by accident, was he placed next the guest of the occasion. What a contrast between him and Larry Delaney, who could rise or sink to any level of conversation with facility, who could meet even Mrs. Trelway on her own doubtful footing, and come as near reducing her to silence as any living being.

At dinner Will Ganton had Mrs. Range Salter on his right and her daughter on his left; immediately opposite were Mrs. Trelway and Delaney, a combination he dreaded. When he saw Mrs. Trelway take in Mrs. Range Salter and her daughter at a glance, then look at him and whisper something to her companion who nodded his head and laughed, Will felt sure there were uncomfortable moments in store for him, with May Keating too far away to help.

Mrs. Salter greeted him with marked cordiality.

"Why have n't you been to see us, Mr. Ganton," she asked, with as much of a look of grieved resentment as her round, plump face could express.

"I have been so — so very busy," he stammered, suddenly remembering he had not been near them since their dinner at the Club.

"But I have seen you very often at the Club with others," she insisted, with an arch look. Mrs. Range Salter, like many short and plump women, was apt to forget she was no longer a girl.

"Why, mamma," interrupted her daughter, "if Mr. Ganton has been busy, that is surely a good excuse." It was said so sweetly, Will Ganton looked at her gratefully and felt all the more guilty.

"I shall come and see you at once," he said with the

A Dinner at the Golf Club

emphatic earnestness of a man who knows he has neglected a social duty.

"If you really wish to see us you will have to come very soon, for we are going away next week;" and Julia Salter smiled as all young girls smile when they talk of holiday trips.

"Where are you going?" he asked with sudden interest.

"To Manchester-by-the-Sea."

"For the summer?"

"Oh, no; only for August. Then perhaps to the White Mountains, though we may come home if papa cannot join us. He says there may be a strike, or something of that kind, and if there is he will have to remain in Chicago. Do you think there will be a strike, Mr. Ganton?" she looked up at him as if he knew all about the matter, and he felt flattered at this confidence. "Oh, dear, I hope there won't be," she continued, without giving him a chance to reply, "for papa has taken no vacation for three years."

"My father has never taken one," he said.

"Never taken a vacation!" she exclaimed, her eyes wide open. "I think that is just awful. Don't you believe in vacations, Mr. Ganton?" and again she looked up at him as if his opinion would be quite conclusive.

"I should say so. I think a man works better after a little play." He looked down at her patronizingly, as if the cares of the industrial state rested heavily on his shoulders. "But I don't see why you should need a vacation, you do not work," he continued lightly.

"Oh, but I have ever so many things to do. I am busy from morning to night; ask mamma."

"What is that, Julia?" asked Mrs. Salter, turning from the man next her, who was beginning to look bored.

Ganton & Co.

"Mr. Ganton thinks I have nothing to do, and I told him to ask you if I'm not busy from morning to night."

"You have no idea, Mr. Ganton, how much the dear child does," exclaimed Mrs. Salter, with all the enthusiasm of a mother describing the merits of a marriageable daughter; and she proceeded to tell that Julia could sew a little, cook a little, and keep house. "I believe in teaching young girls how to keep house, so they will not be dependent on their servants when they are married."

He knew Mrs. Trelway was taking in every word, for Mrs. Salter did not lower her voice in describing the accomplishments of her daughter.

"How perfectly delightful!" Mrs. Trelway interrupted in a clear loud voice. "What an accomplished wife Julia will make, Mrs. Salter! Now if she can only play and sing a little, and paint a little and bind books, she is a paragon. May," she called down the table, "you should hear this list of accomplishments. Can you sew? I can't mend even my own stockings, to say nothing of poor Billy's socks."

Mrs. Salter was furious, but she did not quite know how to resent the cool impertinence of the young woman who was leaning on her elbows and playing with a flower as carelessly and indifferently as if her remarks were of the most casual nature.

"Really," Carrie Trelway continued in the same tone, "I think mothers ought to furnish prospective suitors with printed lists of their daughter's accomplishments, don't you, Mrs. Salter?"

"It would be more to the point to furnish lists of their disagreeable qualities, Mrs. Trelway," was the angry retort.

"Why, yes, if not too long,— a very happy thought,— or,

A Dinner at the Golf Club

better still, a list of vices. I'm sure every man would rather have a list of a woman's vices than of her virtues. Isn't that true, Mr. Ganton?" Under the bold, straightforward look of Mrs. Trelway's dark eyes Will was so confused he could only stammer,

"It — depends —"

"Precisely. I agree with Mr. Ganton perfectly — his views are always so interesting," she ran on ironically.

"You should have heard, May,"—May and the entire table had heard everything. "We all think mothers should compile and print a list of their daughters' vices as well as virtues."

"With due regard to postal regulations," interrupted Delaney, softly.

"And hand them to prospective suitors," she continued, noticing Delaney's remark only by hitting him in the face with the flower in her hand.

"Some might never get married, Mrs. Trelway, if that custom were in vogue." Mrs. Salter was still angry.

"I dare say,—but who knows? Men are such queer creatures, they seem to prefer vices to virtues. Take Mr. Salter, for instance."

"I will thank you to leave Mr. Salter out of the discussion, Mrs. Trelway." Mrs. Range Salter's cheeks were getting just a little white, and Delaney could see an explosion was imminent.

"That's fair," he interrupted. "Suppose you use Billy by way of illustration. What would he have done if he had had —" Delaney hesitated.

"If he had had a list of my vices," exclaimed Mrs. Trelway, coolly, "he would have been more madly in love than

Ganton & Co.

ever. As it is, he loves me for the few he has discovered. He has never tried to find out my many virtues,— a man never loves a woman for her virtues,” she added with conviction.

Julia Salter was listening with both ears wide open. She had often met Mrs. Trelway, but had never heard her talk, and all these queer notions came so much like dashes of cold water that she caught her breath at every third word.

Slafter, McDuffey, and a party of men in red jackets, at an adjoining table, soon became as boisterous as men usually become under the influence of golf and whiskey. As their disputes waxed warm and their hilarity ran high, Mrs. Range Salter began to have misgivings about her wisdom in permitting her daughter to dine at the Club. But the daughter was greatly diverted by the men in the red coats. Later, when Slafter got up — not without difficulty — and proposed the health of the prettiest girl in the room, she blushed, for she felt sure he meant her, he had looked so directly at her. The shouts of “Hear! hear!” which greeted the toast, and her daughter’s red cheeks, quite convinced Mrs. Salter she had made a mistake in coming.

“How those men act, Mr. Ganton!” she exclaimed apprehensively, “I do hope they are not drunk,” and her round, plump face betrayed the anxiety she felt.

“They ’re all right,” he answered reassuringly, “they ’re a pretty noisy crowd, but they don’t mean anything.”

“Who is the man at the head of the table?” Julia Salter asked, with all the curiosity of a child, indicating Slafter.

“The man who proposed your health?” Will asked, smiling.

“He did n’t propose my health,” she contradicted, at the same time blushing violently.

A Dinner at the Golf Club

"You know he did," he continued mischievously, "for I saw him look right at you, and I believe he nodded or something of the kind."

"Why, Mr. Ganton, he did nothing of the kind. How you can fib,—mamma will hear you!" By this time she was covered with confusion and looked apprehensively toward her mother. She was talking across the table to Mrs. Trelway, who was saying,

"From my observation, the young women of to-day know more than their mothers and nearly as much as their fathers."

"I can't agree with you, Mrs. Trelway," said Mrs. Salter, sharply.

"That is because you are not a young woman, Mrs. Salter. Ask your daughter," was the curt response.

"There are some things my daughter does not discuss."

"With her mother, perhaps."

"With any one. I wish you to understand, Mrs. Trelway—" The dispute was becoming acrimonious, and Delaney again hastened to intervene.

"I quite agree with Mrs. Salter," he said diplomatically; "there are many things young people should not discuss—"

"Should not,"—that's another thing," interrupted Mrs. Trelway. "Mrs. Salter said they did not; I say they do. Suppose we submit the matter to Miss Julia, since she is the only one at the table who can tell us."

Julia Salter was again listening to the extraordinary debate; she was fascinated by the dark, penetrating eyes and the heavy eyebrows of Mrs. Trelway, and felt sure she must know all about what she was saying; and she knew her mother was so hopelessly old-fashioned and stupid about many things.

Ganton & Co.

"Does Miss Salter look as if she were ignorant of anything?" Mrs. Trelway gave a quizzical glance at the young girl, who again blushed violently.

Delaney tried to divert his companion, and Mrs. Salter was about to make a sharp rejoinder, when the room was reduced to silence by Slafter, who struggled to his feet once more with all the audacity of his condition, and called out loudly,

"Mrs. Jack, we want to drink to the health of Mr. Jack. Where is he?"

Without a moment's hesitation Mrs. Jack answered, "At home; he declined to come because you men are apt to disgrace yourselves by drinking too much."

"Here 's to the man who gets a drink
And lays it on his brother;
May he live and die of old age,
And never get another!"

was the maudlin response of Slafter as he waved his glass high in the air, spilling half its contents on the red head of little McDuffey.

By this time Mrs. Range Salter was so nervous she could not remain quiet. "Don't you think we 'd better go?" she whispered to Will Ganton. He felt, himself, that it would be just as well if the dinner could be brought to an end, and apparently Mrs. Jack was of the same opinion, for she told the waiter they would have their coffee on the porch, and giving the signal, they all rose to leave; but they did not escape a parting shot from Slafter who called out,

"Here 'sh to the departing stars who leave ush to grope — and drink in darkness."

"I say, Slafter," said little McDuffey, admiringly, as he

A Dinner at the Golf Club

mopped the champagne off his head with a napkin, "you 're a poet."

When on the porch Mrs. Jack asked Delaney at the first opportunity,

"What is the matter with Will to-day? He is not at all like himself."

"Lost some money in the market," Delaney replied laconically.

"Very much?"

"No-o. Forty or fifty thousand, more or less," was the evasive answer.

"Surely, he would not feel that."

"He has no money of his own, and I fancy his father is down on speculation,—that is, on Will's speculating."

Mrs. Jack's face clouded over. "He ought to have sense enough to keep on the right side of his father. What idiots some men are!"

"Will Ganton needs a clear-headed wife to keep him straight. The fact is, he's not strong enough to stand alone, and the right sort of a wife would make a man of him." That was Delaney's honest opinion, and more than once he had told Will Ganton he ought to marry. Mrs. Jack was decidedly of the same opinion, but she did not want her sister to marry him if there was any doubt about his prospects in life. From her point of view it was all well enough for a clever woman to marry a dull husband, provided the husband had sufficient wealth to offset his stupidity.

"Money is clever,—so very clever," she often said.

On the train going back to the city Will and May Keating sat together; but they had little to say. He was moody and she quiet. It was a moonlight night, and as she pressed her

Ganton & Co.

face close against the window-pane and looked out upon the fields and villages as they sped by, it seemed to her as if she were looking out upon another world, a strange and unknown world. Though she knew perfectly each little village flying by in the silvery moonlight, they appeared like the ghosts and shadows of reality in a land of dreams, her imagination carrying her farther and farther away until in her flight she had left the earth far behind. She was half asleep and really dreaming, when the sound of Will Ganton's voice rudely aroused her.

"I say, May, you're not very talkative this evening. Perhaps you'd rather have some one else sit here." This was said in a tone that irritated her almost beyond endurance.

"No; I don't see why you say that. I was looking out the window; it is a lovely night."

"That may be, but I can tell you I have had a deucedly disagreeable evening."

"Why, I thought you were having a delightful time with Julia Salter."

"She's all right — mighty pretty girl; but I can't stand that Mrs. Trelway."

"No, so you said."

"She thinks she is so very clever."

"She is clever."

"Well, I don't see it, unless making other people mighty uncomfortable is being clever." He warmed up as he recalled his injuries.

She made no answer; there was nothing to be said. They relapsed into silence. The matter, however, followed a devious path through his brain, and he suddenly exclaimed,

A Dinner at the Golf Club

"May, you ought to marry a clever fellow like — like Delaney."

"I do not care for Mr. Delaney." Her tone betrayed the irritation she felt.

"I don't mean Delaney himself," he hastened to add, "but some one as bright as he is."

"Clever people are not the easiest to get on with, as you might imagine from Mrs. Trelway's case."

"Gad!" he exclaimed, "I would not be in Billy Trelway's shoes for a fortune."

"Nor I in the shoes of a Mrs. Delaney," she added, smiling.

There was something in her manner that lent him confidence and restored his good humor. For the moment he forgot his losses, the dinner, and even Mrs. Trelway with her unflinching black eyes and heavy eyebrows; he only remembered he was seated by the side of May Keating, and that every one seemed to take it for granted he alone had the right to sit with her.

"Do you think you could marry a man who is not clever?" he asked in a tone that she knew implied more than the mere words. She hesitated; she knew the question would come sooner or later, but she had not expected it in that form. Yet it was the very thing she had been asking herself for a long time, "Can I marry a man who is not clever, who is, on the contrary, dull and heavy? Can I do it?" Suddenly she found herself in a corner where she must answer, and she could not; she could not bring herself even to say that she might; that, she knew, meant she would. Still, she knew she should not say no.

"Really,"—she hardly knew how to get out of the predicament,— "that question will never arise."

"Yes, it will," he doggedly persisted; "tell me, May, do you think you could marry a man as dull and stupid as —" he hesitated, only to blurt out, "as stupid as I am?"

There, he had said it. He did not look up at her, but he noticed she grasped the fan lying in her lap so tightly that she broke one of the sticks, and he wondered what that meant. It seemed a long time before she replied,— so long he began to think she had not understood, and was on the point of asking again, when she replied slowly in a low voice:

"I think I could."

"And that means you will, May?" he asked eagerly, for he began to be filled with delight at the thought of really winning and having as his own the beautiful girl by his side.

"Yes," she answered; this time with an accent of determination, as if her mind was made up, and there was no longer any use debating the matter.

When he sought to look into her eyes to confirm his happiness, she turned and once more pressed her face against the window; but though the moon was still gorgeously bright, its silvery beams fell upon grim reality, the dirty streets and alleys, and the wretched hovels of the outskirts of the great city.

CHAPTER IX

A DAUGHTER OF JEM KEATING

FOR some days Will Ganton worked in his hot, stuffy office at the Yards as he had never worked before.

He carefully avoided his father, spending his nights at the Golf Club. He took an early train into the city, and frequently remained at his desk until six or seven. He knew that soon or late he would have to tell his father about his losses and his indebtedness to the bank, but to his surprise he found he felt less hesitation about speaking of his financial troubles than of his engagement to May Keating. He and she had agreed to keep the engagement secret for a time; for some reason she did not care to have it announced, and he much preferred to tell his father in his own way; though why he should hesitate he did not know, for the question of his marrying had never been discussed by them. The engagement, however, was noised about,—not as an admitted fact, but as one well authenticated. Mrs. Jack took pains to tell two or three of her intimate friends, “quite confidentially,” and each of these friends had her circle of intimates who were also pledged to strict secrecy, so everybody knew all about it within a few days.

Browning was delighted with Will’s devotion to duty. He called him up two or three times a day, partly on matters of business, but also to see if he was still at work.

“Keep this up,” he said one day, “and your father will give you anything you want; he is a different man here at the office.”

Ganton & Co.

That was true. The reports that his son was doing more than his share of work so pleased old John Ganton that he even joked with the office-boy when he came down mornings, and as for Stenographer No. 13, when she looked tired and sick one hot afternoon, he insisted she must take a holiday, and gave her tickets to Lake Geneva for herself and her mother.

"Browning," he said, "the boy is all right. He can work if he wants to, and he has a good head on him. The trouble has been too much society; it 'll spoil any young man."

He stopped Allan Borlan on the street, and exclaimed in a friendly manner: "Well, young man, how are you getting on with your strike? I guess I spoke a little roughly the other day."

"Yes, you did, Mr. Ganton," was the firm response, 'and I felt hurt; but I care less about that than about the fact that you and the other packers are forcing this strike on us just because we will not put up money."

"Well, well, Allan, you 'll live, and in time you 'll learn it 's better to do as others do. The world was n't made in a day, and it can't be changed in a minute. Any time you care to come in and take your chance with the rest of us, I 'll do what I can for you," and the burly form of the old man disappeared up the steps of the bank.

Saturday night Will Ganton went home, and on Sunday morning he met his father at breakfast.

"Well, young man, where have you kept yourself lately?" was the gruff but cordial greeting as Will entered the dining-room.

"At the Golf Club mostly, where it 's a little cooler than in the city," he replied.

A Daughter of Jem Keating

"When I was your age I had no chance to look about for cool spots to sleep. The city's cool enough for me now, and ought to be for you." The old man had little sympathy for the tender sensibilities of the rising generation. "The hotter the day the faster a horse will trot, and the same's true of a man," he invariably said when any of his employees complained of the heat, adding sometimes: "It's all right to look out for the cattle, but the men can look out for themselves. I've had to all my life."

"How are things at the Yards?" he asked abruptly, without raising his eyes from the paper spread out on the table before him, and at the same time munching loudly a piece of toast, and drinking his coffee with a disagreeable sucking noise. As far back as Will could remember his father's breakfast had been the same — ham and eggs and coffee and toast, with old-fashioned, black buckwheat cakes in the winter. Nothing roused the anger of John Ganton more than to hear people talk of coffee and rolls in the morning, and breakfast at twelve o'clock. "That may do for a frog-eating Frenchman, but not for an American who does a day's work before the rest of the world is up. You might as well try to get a head of steam by feeding a boiler with a handful of shavings. Stoke a man as you do a furnace and you'll get the power; that's my motto."

"Things are rushing. Is there anything in this talk of a general strike?" Will asked the question in a tone of assumed indifference.

"Maybe there is, and maybe there is n't," his father chuckled. "Borlan's tied up."

"Yes, and they say we shall all be tied up by the first of the month."

Ganton & Co.

"Well, in what shape will you be for a tie-up?" The old man looked up shrewdly.

"Pretty good, if we rush things for the next two weeks as we have these last two."

"Then we don't care whether there is a strike or not. That 's the shape to be in always," he said, bringing his big fist down on the breakfast-table so hard that the dishes jumped. "Never let the factory stop when the warehouse is empty; just keep that in mind, and you won't go wrong. We shall be ready for a tie-up in two weeks."

"But I thought you said in May, when the schedules were signed with the unions, that there would be no strike to amount to anything for a year."

"So I did, so I did, my boy; but conditions have changed. The teamsters propose to break their agreement, and we want them to. The action of Austria has affected the demand for products so that a shut-down is necessary to keep up prices."

"What is an agreement with the unions good for if they break it whenever they please?"

"Not worth the paper it is written on. What is any agreement good for where one of the parties is an irresponsible and unscrupulous body, managed by a lot of rascals ready to sell out to the first bidder? What do the unions care for their agreements? Not a picayune. All the agreement is good for is to enable the leaders, after we have paid them their price, to keep the men in line by talking about the sanctity of the obligation, and all that sort of stuff. Then the papers sing the same tune, and praise the unions for living up to their agreements. Here 's an editorial now praising the leaders of the teamsters for trying to hold their

A Daughter of Jem Keating

men in line and make them live up to their contract with us.

"Umph!" the old man snorted; "these leaders will go on trying for two weeks, then they will order the men out the day and the minute we tell 'em to, and the papers will print a lot of twaddle about broken agreements." The old man always read the comments of the papers on affairs at the Yards with great interest; they amused him,—as if the press knew anything about what was going on in the Yards, in that strange city within a city, that city of foreigners, of interests, of powers and combinations, of crime and mystery, which the laws of neither State nor Nation could reach. Out there old John Ganton was more powerful than the mayor, or the governor, or the president; he could do things they could not; and whenever he felt disposed he could and did defy the law of the land with impunity. Every attempt to reduce the Yards to subjection, to investigate them, to check unlawful practices, fell by the wayside in council chambers and legislative halls, where "influences" were felt. So the Yards flourished like the green bay-tree, unrestrained.

Will Ganton felt that if his father had only taken him into his confidence a little earlier, he would not have plunged so heavily in the market. "All I can say, father, is I wish you had told me sooner that there might be a strike."

"Why?" The old man looked up quickly.

"Well, you see—" Will hesitated, for it was not easy to tell about his speculations; "you said there would be no strike, so — so I went into the market a little."

"Been speculating, eh?" This time there was no mistaking the anger of the old man. His voice lowered itself

almost to a growl, and the veins were turgid beneath the cleanly shaven skin. "Been speculating, eh?" he repeated slowly. "What have I told you? Have n't I told you to keep out of the market? Men fatten off just such fools as you are."

Will flushed at his father's harsh words. He was on the point of making an angry retort, but he bit his tongue and kept silent. For a moment his father glared at him. Recovering a little from his first burst of anger, he asked gruffly:

"How much have you lost?"

Will gave him the figures and the amount of his indebtedness to the bank.

"So! And where do you expect to get the money?" The tone was cutting, but the flash of temper had subsided.

"I have no means of raising it, unless you will help me, father." The accent of appeal was not lost on John Ganton, and he relented.

"It is a good thing for the family that I have made a little money in the market the last week or two, otherwise we might find ourselves on the way to the poor-house. I will make good your losses on certain conditions," he continued sharply; "first, that you will give me your word not to speculate again; and second, that you will give up your room at the Golf Club, and attend steadily to business at the Yards. Is it a bargain?"

Will was only too glad to make the promises; for the time being he had lost all desire to get rich quick in the market. Giving up his room at the Club came a little harder, for it was pleasant to get away from the city and out into the country on summer evenings and hot nights.

A Daughter of Jem Keating

Then, too, at the Club he was able to see more of May Keating.

Not another word was exchanged at the breakfast-table, but when they went into the long front room — which the architect on his plans called “the library,” and had filled with as many bookcases as he thought the character of the room required,— John Ganton finished his papers; he wasted no time on news that did not directly or indirectly affect some of his many interests. Throwing the papers on the floor, he turned to Will and said with as much affection as he ever displayed:

“I ’ve been watching the way you have attended to business the last few days. I was beginning to think there was nothing in you, and that I could make nothing of you, but you are doing better. All you need is less clubs and less society to make a good business man. Some day you will have to take my place as the head of Ganton & Co., and I want you to be good and ready when the time comes. A little fun at your time of life may be all right now and then,— though I never knew what it was to drop business for pleasure; I got my fun out of my work,— but you can’t hang around clubs, play golf, dine out every evening, and be fit for business. You can’t do that, and I know it. I have seen too many likely young fellows spoiled by that sort of thing. You ’ve got to make your choice of either work or play, and the mixture is weak in proportion to the amount of play it contains. This talk about a certain amount of play being necessary is all bosh, and it encourages the idea that work is drudgery. I tell you the successful man finds his pleasure in his work, and a man can’t be successful unless he takes more pleasure in his work than in anything else.

Ganton & Co.

I can't make anything of your brother,"—the old man's voice rang bitter,— "he's no better 'n a bookworm; but it is in you to work if you buckle to it."

Will had never heard his father speak at such length, and he looked at him in no little astonishment.

"One thing more, Will," the old man continued, compressing his lips tightly as if the subject were distasteful; "it does n't matter to me what girl you marry, so long as she is honest. You will have money enough whether your wife has any or not, and I do not propose to interfere; but —" he paused, and the lines of his mouth were drawn still firmer — "I hear you have been seen a good deal lately with the Keating girls, with Mrs. John Wilton and her sister. It probably does n't mean anything, but I warn you in time; the less you have to do with them the better. If any son of mine should marry a daughter of old Jem Keating, I'd cut him off without a cent." The old man's voice rose, and once more the veins of his face swelled as if they would burst.

Will Ganton stood as if petrified. He had never heard his father speak of Jem Keating, and this bitter prejudice was a complete surprise. He had intended in due course, after proving his diligence at the Yards, to tell his father of his engagement. Up to that moment he had not dreamed of objection or opposition; on the contrary, he had felt sure his father would be only too glad to hear he wished to marry and settle down. What should he do now? Tell his father? That was out of the question at the moment; he must wait. It was some time before he could gather his wits together, and then he said, in a low voice:

"Why, father, I did not know you were so down on Mr. Keating."

A Daughter of Jem Keating

"Down on him — down on Jem Keating!" the old man snorted, his anger rising with each word. "He's no better than a common thief; there's not a drop of honest blood in him, or any of his tribe."

"That's rather rough on the family," Will protested. "They are not to blame for any faults the father may have."

"It's all the same rotten blood. The son went to the devil long ago, and the girls will go there too in their own way. Look at the one who married John Wilton for his money. I'm told she's no better than a common —"

"Stop, father! I don't think it's exactly fair to say such things about a woman behind her back."

"If she were here I'd say it to her face," the old man bellowed; "and I don't want you to stand up for her or any member of the Keating family. The mother was a decent woman, and she cried herself to death. The children are like the father, — not a decent hair on their heads. I want you to drop 'em; I don't want to hear of your being seen with 'em. There are plenty of women who will be mighty glad to get you," he added grimly, "if not for your own sake, then because you are the son of John Ganton. Just bear in mind what I say!" and he left the room, slamming the door behind him.

Will Ganton dropped into a chair by the open window, hopelessly dejected. This bitter opposition was a bolt out of the clear sky. He could not remember that he had ever heard his father so much as mention Jem Keating's name; but now that fact struck him as singular. Both men had lived in Chicago nearly all their lives, and Keating had once been prominent on the Board of Trade, though many years before he had lost all his money. Of course his father knew

Ganton & Co.

him, and the fact that he never spoke of him showed there must have been trouble some time or other. It all seemed clear enough now; but what should he do? what could he do? Any day his father might hear of the engagement,—what then? Will Ganton was afraid of his father; from a child, so long as he could remember, he had stood in awe of the gruff, burly, stern-featured man who said so little except when in a violent passion, and of whom every one stood in terror — no, not every one, for, oddly enough, his brother John never seemed to fear their father, neither as a child, nor later as a boy and a young man. John had once or twice broken out in fits of anger, so violent that they seemed to awe every one about him; but for the most part he was silent, and apparently unmoved by things which disturbed others. “A sulky little brat,” his father said during one of the boy’s fits of temper, and left him alone.

When his mother entered the room she saw something was the matter, and with all a mother’s apprehension feared there had been a scene between Will and his father. Hastening forward, she asked nervously,

“What is the matter, Will?”

“Nothing much.” He tried to appear indifferent.

“Your father was here. I thought I heard his voice ’way up stairs. What is the matter now?” She laid her thin hand gently on Will’s shoulder, and looked into his face, trying to read the truth. These scenes between father and son were not frequent, but they never occurred without filling her heart with apprehension. She feared some day the rupture would be open and irreparable; that her boy might be sent to some Western city, as had been often threatened, where she could not look out for him and care for him.

A Daughter of Jem Keating

Paying no attention to his mother's question, he asked abruptly:

"Mother, was there ever any trouble between Mr. Keating and father?"

"Dear me, why do you ask about that?" She dropped helplessly into a chair. "That was a long time ago. They were once good friends,— dear me, how long ago it seems! John was a baby, and Molly Keating used to come over. What a good woman she was,— we thought everything of her —"

"But," he interrupted, "what was the trouble between father and Mr. Keating?"

"Dear me," she repeated helplessly, "I don't know; something about business. You know Mr. Keating failed and lost all his money. They did say — but I don't know. I was so sorry for them, they were so poor. After she died your father would not let me have anything to do with the family. I have never known the children since they grew up, but they say the girls are very beautiful."

"And so they are, mother," he exclaimed enthusiastically. "May Keating is the most beautiful girl in the world."

"Is she? I don't know. I have not seen her since she was a child; but of course you know all these fine people, Will. I am glad you do, but" — her tone became apprehensive — "I would be careful. Your father would not like it if he heard you knew the Keating girls."

"That's just it, mother. Why should he care? What have the girls done? They are not to blame for anything the father may have done."

"Of course, of course they are not; but your father is very much set against them. He would not let me see them

Ganton & Co.

after their mother died. I never dared disobey him, and you — do you know them very well?" she asked anxiously.

"Why, yes. That is," he stammered, "I have seen quite a little of them."

"And was that what your father was angry about this morning?" she asked with quick intuition.

"Partly. He said some very mean things about the family. I don't care about the father, I don't know him; but the daughters,— that's another thing. May Keating is the finest girl I ever met."

"Why, Will dear, you are not in love with her, are you?" She looked straight into his eyes with so much anxiety and so much affection that he could not hide the truth.

"Yes, I am, mother. You would be in love with her too if you knew her. Every one likes her," he continued with the enthusiasm and exaggeration of a lover, "she is so handsome and so clever — much cleverer than I am."

"But your father — what will your father say when he hears of it?" she repeated anxiously.

"I don't know. I did n't dare tell him."

"No, no; you must not tell him," she interrupted hurriedly. "He would send you away. Perhaps you will get over it," she added hopefully.

"I am not very apt to." He smiled at the absurdity of his mother's suggestion. "I want you to go and see her," he continued.

The suggestion struck terror into his mother's timid heart; to fly in the face of her husband's absolute commands was something she had never done.

"Oh, I would not dare to, Will."

A Daughter of Jem Keating

"But you must for my sake, mother. You must call on them. Father need not know."

"He would be sure to know. He knows everything, and even if he did n't, it would be just as wrong."

"They are not to blame. They are women, and you liked their mother. I want you to go and see them for my sake; I want you to know May Keating. You need not go right away, but by-and-bye, in a week or two. I want to tell them you are coming to call. Will you go?"

How could she resist the appeal? Besides, might it not be that her husband was unjust in his prejudice? She folded her thin white hands helplessly in her lap.

"I want you to promise me you will go, mother. I said you were coming to see them. I did not know there was any trouble. They expect you."

In the end there was nothing for her to do but yield. Mingled with her desire to please Will was a curiosity to see the young woman he loved. In fact, she persuaded herself that it was her duty to see and know May Keating, even at the risk of incurring her husband's anger.

The Wiltons lived on the North Side, in one of those extraordinary houses, so common and conspicuous, wherein the architect attempts to embody novel features in what purports to be a more or less exact copy of some good original — to graft the nineteenth century on an earlier.

Wilton had spent a good deal of his money, and Mrs. Jack all her ingenuity, on this house to make it one of the "sights of the city," as Delaney irreverently put it. As a girl, Mrs. Jack cherished the ambition to live in a house so great that strangers would gaze at it; and she was no sooner

Ganton & Co.

married than she began to talk about building a house. The modest rented place in which they first lived did not satisfy her ambition at all.

"I did not marry you to live in a flat," she angrily exclaimed once when they were discussing the matter.

"But, my dear—" Wilton urged mildly, for he soon learned to dread his wife's outbursts of temper.

"I tell you I won't live here another year," she interrupted, her face taking on the unpleasant expression he had never noticed before they were married, but which was far from infrequent after. So the house was built; he paying the bills, she attending to all the other details.

The result justified the expectations of Mrs. Jack's enthusiastic admirers; the house was indeed a marvel.

J. Bosworth Walworth, who lived next to the Wiltons, and whose Colonial house was an excellent example of that delightful type, wrote a long letter to the press, complaining that people should be permitted to erect such monuments of ugliness on public thoroughfares; but the letter was carefully edited before printed, and it appeared with a picture of J. Bosworth Walworth and his own home as a mild protest against poor architecture in the abstract, but with a glowing tribute to Chicago architecture in general, and J. Bosworth Walworth's Colonial house underlined as the finest example of its kind in the country. Mrs. Jack thought she saw a flattering reference to her own Venetian palace, and smiled so sweetly on J. Bosworth when next they met, and referred in such complimentary terms to his literary skill, that, on the whole, he was mighty glad his letter was not printed *verbatim et literatim*, and even went so far, under the

A Daughter of Jem Keating

influence of Mrs. Jack's permeating smile, as to compliment her on the successful outcome of her efforts.

"If my house were only half so charming as yours, Mr. Walworth," she said modestly.

"It is a palace beside my poor hovel," he replied magnificently.

"How good of you to say so! I value the opinion of any one who writes as you do," and she gave him such a look from her expressive eyes that J. Bosworth thanked his lucky stars — and the discreet editor who had revised his communication. Nevertheless there were moments when the Venetian palace troubled him, and to his intimate friends he said, "That style of architecture has about as much connection with America and American civilization as a Hindoo pagoda, and it is as ugly and incongruous in Chicago as the twenty-two story Masonic Temple would be in Venice."

Not content with displaying her originality and independence of tradition in the matter of Byzantine capitals and Saracenic colonnades, Mrs. Jack, encouraged by her complacent architect and a well-known Wabash Avenue firm of interior decorators, chose a Louis Quinze salon, an Elizabethan dining-room, and a library the wainscoting of which was brought intact from an old house at The Hague. John Wilton was relegated to a den, the hangings of which were imported direct from Cairo, together with a smell which no amount of smoking on his part could dissipate. He had been made to understand he had the privileges of the Louis Quinze salon only on state occasions, and that he was not to take his friends into the panelled library; therefore, when not at the club, he spent most of his time in a room in the third story which, by some lucky chance, had been over-

Ganton & Co.

looked by the decorators. He surreptitiously installed a billiard table and a few comfortable chairs, and spent many an evening with equally homeless married cronies knocking the balls about in a vain endeavor to convince themselves they were having a good time.

"I say, Jack," one of them said one evening, "what's the use of putting your money in a big house like this if you have to spend your time in the attic?"

"No use," was the laconic response.

"Then why the Old Harry did you do it?"

"Could n't help it. . . . Your shot."

"Do you mean to say you let your wife pull you about by the nose, like that?"

"You have met Mrs. Jack?"

"Yes."

"Then what's the use discussing the matter? . . . Your shot."

"Well, I'll be —"

"No doubt."

"Why don't you perk up and be a man, run things yourself?"

"You know Mrs. Jack?"

"Of course I do."

"Then what's the use? . . . Your shot."

That was about all his friends could get out of John Wilton. What he really thought or how he really felt no one knew. Yet he seemed to enjoy himself in his quiet way, playing billiards up there under the roof.

CHAPTER X

ONE SUNDAY AFTERNOON

THE day was warm, but there was a cool breeze off the lake when Will Ganton rang the bell and was admitted to the hall of the "Mosque at Cordova," as Larry Delaney had christened the Wilton mansion, to the secret delight of Mrs. Jack. He gave his hat and stick into the keeping of the sleek footman, whom he recognized as a former employee of the Club, whence he had been discharged for pilfering. He wondered how the fellow happened to get into the service of Mrs. Jack.

There was no one in the library, but he heard loud shouts and childish laughter in the den beyond, where he surprised Jack Wilton and his little boy in the midst of a fierce pillow-fight. The covering had been pulled from the divan, the rare rugs were in disorder, a very antique Turkish narghileh was overturned on the floor, and at the precise moment Harold had his father down and helpless, pelting him with Mrs. Jack's very best pillows.

"Dere!" he exclaimed triumphantly, "'oo are a wobber and 'oo are beaten; now, 'oo are dead," and he gave the helpless and panting "wobber" a blow on the head with the biggest pillow he could lay his little hands on. He caught sight of Will Ganton and ran toward him, shouting:

"Look, Mithter Ganton, I 've killed the wobber."

Just then the "wobber" came to life most unexpectedly, and fired such a volley of hot pillow shots at his small assailant that the latter flew to Will for refuge.

Ganton & Co.

"Help! help! Mithter Ganton; the wobber's tum to life! Hit him!" and with that both began throwing the pillows back with great zest. The battle raged fast and furious, until a crash and the sound of broken glass brought the hostilities to a sudden pause. A flying pillow had brought down a vase valued rather in proportion to the fabulous price paid for it than for any obvious merits.

Will Ganton looked at the fragments in dismay, for many a time had he heard Mrs. Jack relate the marvellous history of that vase. John Wilton looked on phlegmatically. He never did care for that particular vase; a "fake," he once called it, and for three days he and his wife did not speak.

"What will mamma thay?" Little Harold was frightened, and his small voice trembled; he stood in great awe of his mother.

"Never you mind, Major," said his father consolingly, as he drew the little fellow to him, "it was n't your fault; I did it. . . . No," he said, looking at Will with a twinkle in his eye, "no, it was Mr. Ganton who threw that pillow. Suppose you and I go upstairs, youngster, and leave him to settle with mamma. . . . Naughty man, to throw a pillow and break mamma's precious vase."

"Did 'oo do it? Mamma will scold." The little fellow looked at Will as if he were sorry for him.

"Mamma won't scold him as badly as she would you and me, so let's vamoose." He grabbed up the boy and disappeared beneath the *portières* at the rear of the den before Will could do more than call out,

"Look here, Jack, you don't mean to say —"

"What does all this mean, Mr. Ganton? What has happened?" Mrs. Jack's face could not conceal the anger

One Sunday Afternoon

she felt when she saw the disorder. Before he could reply she noticed the fragments of the vase; stepping forward quickly she picked up a piece and spoke in a tone of such fury that Will Ganton was startled. He had never before seen her so angry. Her face took on the expression of some vicious little animal.

"Who did that?" she demanded.

He did not wonder the other two had fled. He was glad they were out of the room; the scene would have been unpleasant had they remained.

"That's some of Jack's work,—pillow fighting with Harold down here where they know they have no business to play. I'll see!" Her voice grew hard and threatening.

"I guess I threw the pillow that hit the vase, Mrs. Wilton," he interrupted meekly.

"Oh no, you did n't, Mr. Ganton; you need not take the responsibility to shield them. I've told them often enough not to do this sort of thing."

"Anyway, I was in it, and it's likely I hit the vase, for I was throwing that way."

With an effort Mrs. Jack kept her tongue between her teeth; she realized she was making an exhibition of herself.

"Oh, never mind; it can't be helped," she exclaimed with an effort to appear indifferent; "accidents will happen. . . . Let's go into the library."

May Keating had spent part of the morning writing a long letter to Mrs. Jarvis Townsend. Their friendship was one of those intimacies which often spring up on short acquaintance between women. Unlike in many respects, there were so many points of contact and sympathy that they felt drawn

Ganton & Co.

to one another from the moment they met; the friendship really began one afternoon at the Casino in Newport, when Mrs. Townsend noticed the futility of her husband's efforts to make an impression upon the handsome Western girl. May Keating's delightful poise and perfect self-possession pleased the maturer woman of the world; she had not the slightest hesitation about inviting her to visit them; so their friendship ripened.

It was not often they wrote one another; Gertrude Townsend was a poor correspondent. "Letters are so ridiculous," she said. "They are of no use except in the divorce court; correspondence nowadays leads to co-respondents. The telegraph is so much more discreet."

But now and then a woman must write — a dangerous impulse, as every man knows. On this particular Sunday morning May Keating felt she must talk with some one — some one besides her sister, to whom she could not tell everything, so she wrote in part as follows:

"You are in Paris; that means you are in another world. The distance between us cannot be measured in miles; you have slipped out of my sphere, and for the time being are as far away as if in some fairy-land beyond the clouds.

"I can see you lazily sipping your coffee in your room mornings, half bored with the thought that the day must be spent somehow and somewhere; that the evening must be passed with some one, or two or more,— for if with more than one it matters not how many. I can see you breakfasting at — at — where? with — with — whom? I cannot see the face distinctly, as the fortune-teller says, but tall and dark, I fancy; distinguished, I am sure. Again I can see you driving in the Bois, slowly following the grand procession of *monde et demi-monde*, gazing listlessly at the same rouged

One Sunday Afternoon

faces and chic toilettes that appear in the Grande Allée season after season. Whence come these painted faces? How are their ranks recruited? Do they never grow old? Do they never die? The men one sees are seldom the same; they wither like leaves; they appear for a season to return perhaps never again. But the women — ?

“I can see you dining at the Château Madrid in a secluded corner, at a little table for two, — I hope the blind god is good to you, — with the soft shades of the candles lighting up your pale, fascinating face. You are resting your chin in your hands, and your elbows on the table looking *him* — who is he? — direct in the eyes, as you are wont to do when the eyes are worth searching; while he — write me who ‘he’ is — yields like a dove to the subtle power you exercise over all men you care to look at twice. I can almost hear the strains of the weird Hungarian dance. Does the big fellow in the red coat still walk to and fro among the tables, playing his violin and leading his band of players as if in a dreamy rapture?

“Could the ingenuity of man devise surroundings more seductive to the weak soul of woman? Has not some one called Paris Hell’s gateway? If you do not want my imagination to picture you as behaving worse than you are, write and tell me *what* you are doing, and with whom you are driving and dining, for I am bored to death. I must have some excitement. I feel like doing something desperate, and were I in Paris instead of Chicago I should be ready for any thing the Fiend might suggest. Here the few temptations there are present themselves in a guise so coarse that a taste at all fastidious craves virtue by contrast; no woman who has any respect for herself can be tempted by daylight; gas-light is common, electricity impossible — only by the flickering light of softly shaded candles, or by the pale silvery rays of the moon, or where ten thousand stars make darkness visible, does the Devil walk abroad in his most subtle moods. Here they ask a woman to folly as one man invites another to take a drink.

Ganton & Co.

“What a school of vice your Newport is! Really it is a post-graduate course to that University of Sin, Paris. Your women are all so clever; your men such delightful fools, with nothing to do but wear their motley for your amusement. I would give all I have in the world to be able to spend my summers in Newport. But alas! what have I to give? No money, some reputation,—but reputation is so soon spent at Newport. How much virtue must a woman really squander to be successful in your colony? And once gone, does the paste substitute which passes current meet all the requirements of good society? Tell me, that I may decide where to go and what to do.

“A question equally serious: Shall I marry for money — for a whole lot of money? You know I would not marry for a few thousands, or even for a million or two — I have too much sentiment for such a mercenary match; but every sentiment has its price, and mine begins to yield at the prospect of many millions. What do you say my price should be? assuming the man to be neither attractive nor unattractive, neither good nor bad, neither clever nor hopelessly stupid,—a negligible quantity socially.

“If I had my choice,—but then, I have not, so what is the use of speculating?—I must marry. Shall I marry for money, and if so for how much? Answer me quickly for the opportunity is here, or rather will be here for luncheon, and I may have difficulty in staying the bans until your reply tells me what to do.”

Adding a few lines more, she folded the letter and hurried down to luncheon.

As Wilton came into the dining-room, he greeted Will as cordially as if they had not met before that day.

“Why, Ganton, glad to see you.”

“You need n’t —” Mrs. Jack interrupted sharply, but suppressed the angry exclamation that rose to her lips. The

One Sunday Afternoon

look she gave her husband was, however, far from reassuring; but he gave Will an almost imperceptible wink as he took his seat, as much as to say, "You see, old fellow, I am in for it," and thereupon relapsed into his customary silence, this time to his wife's disgust. Strive as she might, the conversation lagged.

Will Ganton was depressed by the unpleasant interview with his father. May Keating, with the uncanny intuition of a woman, divined that something was wrong, and felt sure the trouble affected her; the luncheon was passing in monosyllables. Mrs. Jack at length lost patience, and exclaimed with some irritation:

"Well, if you people won't talk, but want to eat like a lot of dummies, you may do so."

"It is not the hour of day for talking," her sister answered.

"Then why did you ask Mr. Ganton to luncheon if you had nothing to say?" was the sharp and rather tactless rejoinder.

"For the pleasure of his company. It is n't necessary to keep talking continually, is it,— Will?" Strange, how hard it was for her to call him by his first name.

"By no means," he answered quickly. "I should be sorry if you treated me as company; besides," he added, looking at Mrs. Jack with mock penitence, "I am in disgrace."

"How — what have you been doing?" May Keating asked, looking up in surprise.

Up to that moment the broken vase had not been mentioned, Mrs. Jack having carefully avoided the subject.

"Well, you see," he went on apologetically, "when I came in I found myself in the midst of an awful battle between

Ganton & Co.

Harold and a big, burly, ugly, villainous stage robber. I immediately took a hand against the robber and threw a pillow which ought to have killed him, but instead it hit one of Mrs. Wilton's most precious vases, and smashed it into smithereens. How can you expect me to talk with a load like that on my conscience?"

"You don't mean to say you broke that iridescent vase!" Wilton exclaimed in a tone of exaggerated surprise, mingled with well-feigned regret.

"It's all right for you two men to make light of that vase, but it was the most perfect example of its kind in America. It came from the Dampur collection. And you broke it," Mrs. Jack said threateningly, turning to her husband; "you know you did."

"My dear, Mr. Ganton says he broke it," Wilton protested meekly.

"No, he did n't," she snapped, "you and Harold were playing downstairs and you both know better. I have half a mind to punish him for his disobedience. He is old enough to know better."

A look of pain and anxiety passed over John Wilton's face; he feared his wife in her anger might punish the little fellow in order to reach him, so he hastened to say:

"It was not Harold's fault, Sally; he did not want to play." That was a fib. "I began it, and just as Will came in I knocked the vase down."

"That sounds more like the truth," she commented sharply.

"But it is n't," Will Ganton protested. "I took a hand in the fight, myself, and have n't the slightest doubt I threw the pillow that hit the vase."

One Sunday Afternoon

"What difference does it make?" May Keating interrupted in a tone which expressed her weariness with the discussion. "The vase was broken accidentally; it is no one's fault. Why not let the matter drop?"

"But they knew better than to play," Mrs. Jack persisted, as if personally aggrieved.

"Suppose they did; we all know better than to do many things we do do," was the pointed rejoinder. "If you say much more Jack and Mr. Ganton will replace the vase, — these unique examples are always in the market, at a price."

When her sister spoke in this tone of scarcely veiled irony, Mrs. Jack was always just a little afraid, so she changed the subject.

When they were alone in the library after luncheon, May Keating scrutinized Will Ganton closely. A delightful breeze came through the open windows, blowing the filmy curtains out into the room; the furniture wore its summer covering of chintz, the pattern of which was rather loud.

"What a lovely afternoon," he said, as he stood with his hands in his pockets, looking out of one of the windows.

"Yes," she assented shortly, knowing perfectly well his mind was no more on the weather than it had been on the luncheon; but she waited for him to speak. There was a long pause, during which he fidgeted about. Withdrawing his hands from his pockets he played with the cord to the shade, tying it into many little slip-knots, then with a sharp jerk undoing them.

"I say, May," he exclaimed, turning toward her, but still standing by the open window, "my mother says she is coming to see you and Mrs. Jack — very soon." She noticed that he hesitated a little before he said "very soon," and she

Ganton & Co.

knew just as well as if she had been present and heard the conversation between mother and son that some objection had been urged, that some obstacles had arisen; that, for some reason, Will had difficulty in persuading his mother to make this call. She wondered what the trouble was, but merely remarked,

“You have told her, then?”

“Yes,—that is, I have told her that you are the loveliest girl in the world, and that I love you.” He continued to fidget with the curtain cord. “I have not told her we are engaged.”

“Why not?” Her tone was hard and peremptory, and he felt confused,—why had he not told his mother the whole truth? He felt guilty.

“Well—you see—May,” he hesitated, “of course, she knows—she understands, so it was n’t necessary for me to say it in so many words.” He brightened up at this thought.

“But why did you not tell your mother the truth directly?” she insisted, and her tone seemed to him still harsher. “Is there any reason why she should not know?”

“Why, you see, we were not going to announce it for a time.”

“Not formally, no, to avoid a lot of silly congratulations, but you seemed very glad to tell Jack and my sister.”

“Of course they ought to know.”

“And most of my friends know.”

“But I have n’t told them—upon my honor, May, I have not said a word to any one about it. I can’t imagine how so many have managed to find it out.” He looked mystified.

One Sunday Afternoon

A faint smile hovered about her mouth at the earnestness of his protest.

"They know it, that is sufficient; the engagement is as good as announced, and yet for some reason you do not tell your mother. What is the reason?"

"I tell you she does know, May; of course she understands."

"Does your father also know?" she interrupted sharply.

"No — no — it would never do to tell him just now," he exclaimed hurriedly, his voice expressing his apprehension at the mere suggestion.

"And why not, pray?" she asked coldly.

"Why, you see, May," — how often he began his explanations with those same words! they irritated her, — "father is very peculiar. He expects me to devote all my time to business, — and all that sort of thing. He's down on me for playing the social game so much."

"So you do not dare tell him you have staked yourself in this 'social game' and lost?" Her lips were tightly compressed.

"Gad, that's about it, May," he said, relieved that she should take this view of it. "To tell you the truth, I lost some money in the market this last week, and when I told him he came down on me pretty hard. He made me promise not to speculate, to give up my room at the Golf Club, not to go out so much, — and all that sort of thing."

"When did all this happen?" she asked, wondering if he was telling her the whole truth.

"This morning I told him about my losses."

"And you did not dare tell him about your gains?" she asked, with an irony he completely missed.

Ganton & Co.

"My gains?" he looked up surprised; "but I did n't make any gains — that's the worst of it."

"Yes; that while you lost some money — a mere bagatelle, I dare say — you had gained a wife, a prospective wife."

He did not know whether she was serious or making fun of him, whether she was angry or not, and he was therefore more than ever embarrassed.

"I did not dare, May. . . . Not yet; we must wait."

"How long?" she asked quickly.

"Why, until — until I get into the rut out at the Yards, and show him I mean business."

"Very well," she said, so calmly that he congratulated himself on getting out of an awkward predicament. He went over and sat down beside her, and attempted to take her hand in his.

Drawing back quickly, she said, "Don't you think you had better sit over there?"

"What is the matter, May?" he asked in amazement.

"Nothing, only I should feel embarrassed if any one came in and saw you sitting beside me, and trying to hold my hand." She drawled her words, and looked at him through her half-closed eyes with an expression he did not like.

"Oh, nonsense. It's perfectly absurd. They all know."

"But they do not know that you do not dare tell even your mother — to say nothing of your father — that you are willing to play the lover here, but not at home. These things they do not know, and would not approve if they did; therefore, if you do not at once take that chair I shall be obliged to sit there myself."

He could see that she meant what she said. Without

One Sunday Afternoon

another word he changed his seat, feeling and looking very foolish. At the same time he was dimly conscious she was right; that until he had the courage to make their engagement known he had no right to ask favors.

They sat in silence; he hoping she would relent a little and say something, while she looked bored.

"I have some letters to write," she remarked at last, "and as we are to meet later at the Club for dinner, I will ask you to excuse me. I dare say you will find Jack in his billiard room, if you care to go up."

Without waiting for his reply she left the room. Angry and chagrined, he had no desire to see Wilton; he stood a few moments by the window undecided what to do. At last, finding his hat and gloves, he hurried from the house. He walked toward the Park, rapidly at first, more slowly as his anger cooled.

It was so early in the afternoon that comparatively few people were out walking; hardly any one he knew.

On reaching the Park he turned to the outer drive, following the broad concrete walk along the Lake. A host of confused thoughts chased through his mind.

Why had May Keating treated him so? he kept asking himself. Had he not done the best he could? What difference did it make whether he told his father one time or another? Had they not agreed not to announce the engagement? . . . And yet, every one seemed to know. Who had told? . . . What an ugly expression Mrs. Jack had when she was angry over the broken vase, and how sorry he felt for John Wilton — how sorry every one seemed to feel for John Wilton! He was such a good fellow, so quiet, so gentle, so meek and unassuming, and so devoted to his boy.

Ganton & Co.

Many even went so far as to say that if it were not for the boy Mr. and Mrs. Jack would have separated long ago. And he knew all these things, and yet he was in love with Mrs. Jack's sister, and intended to marry her.

Could it be the two sisters were at all alike? He had persuaded himself May Keating was different from her sister, and had never so much as thought of her as the daughter of old Jem Keating. That connection seemed altogether casual; yet the two women were sisters, and daughters of the one man. He could see that Mrs. Jack might be as like her worthless father as a woman can be, and still maintain herself in good society — was it possible that he was blind to the shortcomings of the younger sister, or that in the eyes of others she, too, was a daughter, physically, mentally, and morally, of her father? The thought was so objectionable that he rejected it as beyond the range of possibilities; but it came back to plague him.

He seated himself on the edge of the concrete which divides the walk from the stones that slope down to the water; when he sat down there was not a soul in sight. His attitude betrayed his dejection; as he endeavored to think he looked out upon the lake, his eyes unconsciously following a steamer disappearing slowly in the northwest. While he was trying to concentrate his mind upon the problem before him, some small voice within was pertinaciously saying: "I wonder if that steamer is bound for Milwaukee! Yes; it must be. It is an excursion steamer. No." — and so on endlessly, as if one branch of his mind were thinking of one thing, and another entirely occupied with something else, both clamoring for his undivided attention. And that was always the way, — it was so hard to think, to put his

One Sunday Afternoon

mind on one thing and keep it there, to exclude absolutely all vagrant thoughts. The fate of himself and May Keating became somehow inextricably mixed up with the destination of the receding steamer: if that was really bound for Milwaukee, then,—but if it was not . . . how utterly ridiculous! Once more he looked down at the stones at his feet, and tried to think whether the two sisters were really alike, and whether they resembled their father. Instead of coming to a conclusion he noticed to his surprise that his left glove was split between the first and middle fingers. This led him to examine the right carefully—the gloves had been purchased only the day before. “What rotten stuff!” he said to himself. “I’ll take them back to-morrow,” and as he put them in his pocket, his mind returned to the all-important subject, circling about it endlessly.

“I hear you are engaged, Mr. Ganton; permit me to congratulate you.”

He recognized the loud, clear voice at once, and turned to find Mrs. Trelway behind him. He felt embarrassed,—as he always did in her presence,—while a faint smile played about her firm lips, and she looked him full in the face with that bold, penetrating look he knew so well. Noting his confusion, she continued:

“You do not seem very happy, sitting here alone and gazing moodily over the lake. You look more like a jilted lover. You—you are not thinking of jumping in, are you?”

“Really, Mrs. Trelway —” He was about to attempt a bit of sarcasm; but, ignoring his manner, she sat down beside him and continued:

“After all, why not? Might not the lake be preferable

Ganton & Co.

to the sea of matrimony whereon so many risk and lose both lives and fortunes? Why do you marry, Mr. Ganton? Why does any young man with prospects in life marry?"

She looked at him keenly, but now her tone was friendly and her manner serious.

"For love, I suppose," he answered doubtfully. "Most men marry for love, don't they, Mrs. Trelway?"

"In most countries, no. Why should you marry the first woman who captivates your fancy? Why not the second, or the third, or the tenth? By what mark do you recognize the divinely chosen one? If you lived in New York or San Francisco, is it not certain some other appointed one would be found at about this period of your life? You have arrived at the age when a man craves a woman—usually a good many; some woman is sure to find you in this susceptible condition, and gather you as a gardener plucks the fruit about to fall. Why drop into the first apron stretched beneath you? Why not consider a prospective alliance for life as coolly, calmly, and soberly as you would the offer of a business partnership for a few years?"

"Then you don't believe in love, Mrs. Trelway," he said.

"Love, love, love!" she exclaimed impatiently. "What do you know about love? What do you mean by love? A bundle of impulses,—most of them bad. You say you love a woman; you think now you are in love with the one woman destined from the beginning of time to make you happy. I tell you the love of the unmated man is simply the natural craving for woman,—not for *a* woman, but for the sex. If you had gone to live elsewhere years ago, do you think you would have wandered about the earth disconsolately in search

One Sunday Afternoon

of your present divinity, or that she would have waited for you to come from the antipodes?"

He could not help laughing at the extravagance of her speech.

"Perhaps not; but I am not in Europe or Asia, and here there is but one woman."

"Oh, bosh! There are a dozen, a hundred, who would be glad to get you; most of them for your money, possibly some of them for yourself — women are such fools."

"But I don't want them." His tone expressed the annoyance he felt.

"That is because you have not considered them. You are like a small boy whose heart is set upon a pop-gun, when everybody knows he will be just as crazy for a drum a little later. . . . Don't you like Julia Salter?" she asked suddenly.

"Why, yes,— a lovely young girl. I like her very much. But why?" he asked doubtfully.

"Well, if you were left to yourself and looked twice, you would fall in love with her."

He laughed at the suggestion, but she continued:

"I could introduce you to a dozen girls, to say nothing of anxious young widows, with any one of whom you would be madly in love,— with a little clever management. You are ripe, and you don't know it; somebody is about to pick you, and you don't know it," she added, with some of the coarse frankness for which she was notorious.

He did not like what she said or her manner of saying it. Yet he did not quite know how to resent it, for he felt she was not trying to make fun of him. On the contrary, he was sure she thought she was giving him good advice.

Ganton & Co.

"It is none of my business, of course," she continued; "but if I were you, if I were a young man in your position, I would go about matrimony as I would the purchase of a horse, and get the best I could for my money; and" — she paused significantly — "make sure of the breed."

This time the hard, cold ring in her voice was unpleasantly obtrusive.

"Perhaps I am stupid, but I can't look upon marriage as I would on a horse trade, Mrs. Trelway." He meant by his tone and words to administer a cutting rebuke. She only laughed and looked at him with her big dark eyes.

"Yes; you are stupid, Mr. Ganton. Most men are, but you are stupider than the average."

"Thank you," he said, with all the resentment he could express.

"But, like most stupid men, you are rather likable, and really —" she paused and held out her hand — "I do wish you well." To his surprise he found himself taking her hand in a most friendly grasp. "If you would only adopt the horse-trade policy it would be so much better in the end." She turned and walked away without giving him an opportunity to reply.

He was at a loss where to go; he had expected to spend the afternoon at the Wiltons' and go with them to the club, and now he did not care to return home. He was not in the mood to go to one of his clubs. He even thought of dropping out of the dinner,— if he were only sure it would pique May Keating, he would do so. As always happens, he had reasoned himself into the attitude of the injured

One Sunday Afternoon

party, and so wished to have some revenge for the slight put upon him.

In this mood he called at the Range Salters', fully intending, if they invited him to dinner, to remain,—or rather to return, for it was still early. But the Salters were all out,—at least so the sleek-faced footman said, though the man was probably lying. He was sure the Salters had seen him coming up the steps, and he was quite certain he saw Mrs. Salter's round face disappear behind the curtain of one of the front windows. "Now that it is reported I am engaged, they are not so anxious to see me," he thought to himself, "that is where they make their mistake. I may not be so much engaged after all," and he walked down the broad steps of the Range Salter mansion feeling as if there were eyes at every window to watch his discomfiture.

Now that he was possessed with the idea that somehow he must find an invitation to dinner in order to show his independence of Mrs. Jack and her entire family, he tried the Northwood Kings', where he had never called in his life, notwithstanding several friendly and pressing invitations. But they were out of the city,—this time he knew the footman was not deceiving him, for the man came to the door in a greasy, shiny alpaca coat and with dirty collar and cuffs; besides, the steps were thick with dust, and the papers of several mornings were in the corner of the vestibule where the newsboy had thrown them.

As he crossed over to Rush Street the idea occurred to him to go and see Delaney, whose bachelor quarters were not far from the water works.

A neat and pretty maid said she thought Mr. Delaney was in,—“Second floor front, if you please, sir.”

Ganton & Co.

His knock at the door was repeated before it was answered by a loud "Come in." Entering, he found Delaney stretched at full length on the sofa, apparently just awakened from an afternoon nap.

"Why, Ganton, is that you?" he exclaimed, sitting up; "where the deuce did you come from? Sit down," and he brushed the newspapers out of an easy-chair.

Will Ganton sat down, feeling not quite at home. He had been in Delaney's rooms only once before, one afternoon when the latter served tea to Mrs. Jack and a few friends. The truth was, he did not know Larry Delaney very well,—no one did,—and it struck him that he might be intruding.

"Sorry to disturb you. I did n't know you were napping."

"Of course you did n't; how could you? I did n't know it myself." Delaney's manner was so cordial, Will felt more at ease and put his hat on the table beside him and leaned back in the comfortable reclining-chair. Delaney's room reflected the tastes and habits of its occupant; there were shelves filled with books that were thumbed and worn, the walls were decorated with foils and masks and boxing-gloves which had seen hard usage, and there were one or two emblems which Will did not understand and which Delaney never troubled himself to explain. It was singular that every one took it for granted Delaney was a university man, but no one knew his alma mater. He never talked about himself,—perhaps because he knew that the atmosphere of mystery made him all the more interesting.

"Thought you were lunching at the Wiltons'," he said after a pause.

"So I was," Will Ganton answered shortly. Larry

One Sunday Afternoon

Delaney did not fail to note the young man's manner, and suspected a lovers' quarrel.

"It must be hotter than blazes in the sun," he remarked casually, by way of changing the subject.

"Yes; but there is a cool breeze off the lake. I was just up through the park,—met Mrs. Trelway."

"Ah!" Delaney appeared indolently interested.

"She's a queer woman," Will remarked, with emphasis on the adjective.

"Rather an interesting woman. Don't you think so?" Delaney's manner was so indifferent, Will Ganton was surprised.

"I thought you two were great friends."

"Not great friends, just good — or bad friends, as one looks at it. A great social philosopher would probably hold that a man and a woman may be the best of enemies, but never 'good' friends. Goodness is a quality not closely allied to friendship between the sexes."

This was too deep for Will, for what he did not know about philosophy would fill several volumes, and what he did know about women could be compressed within the covers of a very small primer. Be it said to his credit, he never pretended to a knowledge he did not possess, but if anything, was rather too quick to admit his ignorance.

"She's a queer talker, anyway," he remarked in a tone of profound conviction.

"So few people nowadays say what is in their minds that the frank expression of one's thoughts sounds queer."

"Gad, I should say so. A few more like her would paralyze society."

"Or galvanize it out of its moribund condition into life.

Ganton & Co.

Who knows? Society may need a few Mrs. Trelways to get acquainted with itself, to see its own smirking countenance as in a mirror, and thereby learn to be and look more natural." Delaney had dropped back on the sofa, and with his legs drawn up and crossed was looking at the ceiling, where he detected a cobweb in process of manufacture near the window-casing. "Mary Jane is a good looker, but a poor duster," he thought to himself.

"For my part, I don't care to have my faults and failings discussed at the dinner-table," Will Ganton answered with the air of a man who had passed through some uncomfortable experiences.

Delaney laughed.

"If she would pounce on you, then I might see the fun in it," Will continued.

"We have had our moments of frankness, — I guess we understand each other."

"If I had your gift of repartee, Larry, I would get on better."

"Oh no, you would n't," Delaney interrupted; "you'd lose half the friends you have. It is better to take things in your good-natured way than to fight back. There is a good deal of the Indian in women; they never forgive any one who beats them at their own game. My position is not unlike that of the Czar of all the Russias; I keep my ascendancy by terrorizing, but may be blown up at any moment."

There was a pause; Delaney knew there was something on Will's mind besides Mrs. Trelway, but he was not a little startled when the latter blurted out,

"I say, Larry, you know I am engaged."

One Sunday Afternoon

"Yes — I —"

"Well, what do you think of it?"

"I congratulate you, of course," was Delaney's hearty response.

"I do not mean that. What I want to know is, what do you think of it? Am I the sort of man to marry May Keating? You know them so well, tell me what you think, honestly."

He spoke so earnestly, so appealingly, that Delaney for a moment hardly knew how to reply. His assurance nearly forsook him; for a second he was on the point of saying frankly, "No, a thousand times no, my dear fellow, you are not!" but recovering his self-possession he tried to evade a direct answer.

"That is for you to decide; apparently you are, or she would not have accepted you."

"I am not so sure of that," Will muttered doubtfully; "mighty few women marry for love, nowadays."

"More than you think," was Delaney's quiet interjection. "To their sorrow, for the most part."

"Well, anyway, no woman is going to marry me for love," rejoined Will in a hopeless tone.

"Why not?" Delaney looked at his friend in surprise, and could scarcely repress a smile when he saw the utter dejection expressed in the latter's countenance.

"Because — because I am the son of John Ganton, and they think I shall inherit some of his millions. They may get fooled on that score."

This time Delaney looked at Will more keenly as he asked:

"Why do you say that?"

"No one will know where father's money goes until his

Ganton & Co.

will is read; if he took it into his head to cut me off he would do it in a minute."

"You have no interest in the business?"

"Only some stock he gave me, but that has a string to it; I could not sell it without first offering it to him at a price fixed. I say, Larry, do you think May Keating would care to marry me if I were a poor man?"

"Well, frankly speaking, my dear fellow, I do not think she is cut out for the wife of a poor man; or rather if I were a poor man I would not run the risk of making two people unhappy by marrying her. However, she is a strange girl, with more fine qualities than her friends suspect, and she might do anything with the man she loved."

"I guess I don't understand her very well," Will remarked disconsolately.

"Then I would advise you to get acquainted with your future wife before you are married. Many a man postpones this important introduction until it is too late."

"I say, Delaney, how is it you never married?" Will asked his question so suddenly Delaney was quite taken by surprise, and made no reply. He turned and looked out of the window on the hot and dusty street, where the worn and rotten wooden block pavement made it rough going for a carette that was passing north: by a freak of fancy the street changed to a broad boulevard, well paved and lined with trees, the lumbering vehicle to a victoria, the limping horses to a team of spirited bays, the fat and round-shouldered driver with his battered hat to coachman and footman in spotless livery, those within to — He looked but he could not quite make out who were in the carette, but the features of the woman in the victoria were familiar, very familiar indeed.

One Sunday Afternoon

How singular he should recall this scene so vividly; he thought he had quite forgotten! There he was in Chicago, looking out upon Rush Street from the second-story window of an old red brick house, while by some subtle psychological process the reality before his eyes was transformed to quite another scene. As the rumbling vehicle disappeared, the victoria, with its men in livery, and the woman whose features he so well recalled, also vanished, and only the street with its rotten pavement and swirls of dust remained.

"I say, Delaney —" Will Ganton repeated.

"Yes; I know," Delaney interrupted with a trace of impatience, "you were asking why I never married. That is a long story, too long and boresome for a hot afternoon."

"Gad, I half believe you've been married," Will exclaimed, with a sudden suspicion that his friend had been keeping it secret.

"I wish I were," Delaney responded evasively, but with an appearance of frankness quite disarming; "for then I should not be keeping bachelor quarters in this miserable hole. Let's go for a walk. I have not been out of the house to-day."

But Will Ganton did not care to walk. He knew they would be certain to meet some of their friends on the lake front or in the Park, and he was not in the mood. So he left Delaney at the door, and went down to the Club, where he found two or three acquaintances with whom he spent the remainder of the afternoon talking and drinking.

When May Keating went to her room she threw herself down in a chair by the window, angry with Will Ganton and angry with herself for being angry with him. She began to

Ganton & Co.

feel she had acted impulsively and foolishly, like a young girl in love, like a hot-headed child, — after all, what did it matter to her whether he told his parents at one time or another?

She sighed wearily and looked out of the window; she knew she ought to go back to the library, but she did not. She watched Will Ganton go down the steps, and she felt that it was all a blunder on her part, and that for once she had not played her cards well. But the truth was, the luncheon had bored her beyond endurance. To see him sit at the table eating as stolidly as if they were already married and in their own house irritated her: could she stand it day after day and year after year? For that sort of humdrum domesticity she was not cut out. She noticed that he bolted his glass of water in great gulps, and swallowed his claret as if it were beer; that his hands were large and his finger nails short and stubby,— and she wondered why she had never before seen those short and stubby finger nails, and could not help recalling Delaney's small but very strong hand, the slender fingers, and perfect finger nails. Blood tells; the blood of the butcher, of old John Ganton, versus the blood of the — adventurer; for who knew anything about Delaney's antecedents?

She noticed how he grasped his fork, how firmly he held his knife far down the blade, and how brutally he used them both — as if they were the implements of his trade. He ate so rapidly and so heartily; as if the luncheon, the food, the satisfaction of hunger, were all he had come for. What possessed her to suddenly note all these things, to his disadvantage? They had lunched and dined at the same table a hundred times, and he had not struck her as essentially

One Sunday Afternoon

different from most men; but now — what had come over her? Was it the letter she had written Gertrude Townsend? Was it the thought of Paris with its thousand and one delightful places where people meet to make love under pretence of eating? She could not tell, but this was one of the days when Chicago and all its people seemed to her crude beyond endurance; when she longed to get away, somewhere, anywhere, even into the country, where she would see no one.

She was subject to these moods; there were times when life about her pressed with such exasperating familiarity that she thought she would go wild. She had even walked beside the Lake wondering if it would not be better to throw herself in and end everything — at times this idea had seized her so strongly she would draw back startled at the almost overwhelming force of the secret suggestion. What had she to live for? What promise of happiness did the future hold out? None, absolutely none: merely marriage with a man she did not love, for the sake of money she did not care for. Unlike her sister, she was not dependent upon money; she could marry a poor man for love; she could have married — but what was the use of thinking of that; the dream of a summer? Unlocking a small drawer in her secretary, she took out three or four unmounted photographs, small-prints of snap-shots made at the seashore, and as she looked at the groups caught in holiday mood, at herself seated on the sand beside a young man whose fine features betrayed no line of coarseness or vulgarity, she recalled those precious hours which sped so swiftly by — fleeting seconds never, never to be revived, and her eyes were wet with tears. Hastily locking the photographs in the little drawer, she threw herself upon the couch and sobbed like a school-girl.

Ganton & Co

Later, when Mrs. Jack found that Will Ganton had left the house, she went to her sister's room, feeling sure there had been a quarrel of some kind. It was only after a series of searching questions that she learned the truth. She looked at her sister, and said in a tone that did not disguise her exasperation,

"May Keating, you are a fool!"

"Perhaps I am; most women are fools."

"Here you are engaged to Will Ganton, the son of the richest man in Chicago, and you quarrel with him because he has not told his father quite as soon as you think the proprieties require. You are a fool!" Mrs. Jack's anger was rapidly rising.

"There is no use scolding about the matter, Sally." May Keating's nerves were already at breaking tension. "I just could not help it; he irritated me so I could not stand it, and when he as much as said he did not dare tell his father, it was the last straw. Why should he be afraid to tell his father? What right would John Ganton have to raise any objection? Are we not as good as he is — a common —"

She was excited; her hands played nervously with the covering of her chair. She was becoming hysterical; an unusual thing for one ordinarily so self-possessed. Yet Mrs. Jack had known her sister to walk the floor many a night in the effort to quiet her overwrought nerves, and she hastened to say soothingly:

"Never mind, dearie, it will all come right in the end. You will see him at dinner to-night."

"I don't want to see him — I don't want to see him," she repeated, as she bent forward and covered her face with her hands. "I can't marry him, Sally,— what is the use? I can't marry him, that is all there is about it."

One Sunday Afternoon

Dismayed at her sister's tone of desperation, Mrs. Jack put her arm about May's neck, whispering softly:

"There, there; don't think anything more about it now. You don't have to marry him to-day; there is plenty of time. You are tired and nervous; lie down and rest a while."

After persuading her sister to take off her dress and lie down, Mrs. Jack left the room quietly. But May Keating did not go to sleep, and there was no use trying. Whenever she closed her eyes all she could see was the burly figure and round, red face of old John Ganton, with his sharp eyes, his big nose, and thick lips. Yes; Will Ganton would look like him in time. He would be big and burly, and his face would take on that look of brutal animal strength; but his eyes were not the same. They were softer and milder, and his mouth was weak; yes, any one could see he had a weak mouth. He must have inherited his eyes and mouth from his mother, for there was nothing weak about his father's face. Men feared the father, but who would fear the son? Who could ever stand in awe of Will Ganton?

She found herself asking these questions, repeating them over and over, chasing the same thoughts around in a circle with her eyes closed until she really did doze off. Father and son became so confused in her mind that she thought she had promised to marry the former; and she could see his sharp eyes looking straight at her; his thick lips laughing ironically, as much as to say: "Well, my girl, how do you like me for a husband?" Oddly enough she felt no repugnance at the thought, for there was something fascinating about the brutal strength of the coarse features, and the power of the man appealed to her. She felt relieved to think that after all it was the father she was to marry, and not the son.

Ganton & Co.

. . . On a sudden the expression of the old man changed: his face became purple with rage, he turned upon her as if to strike her, his eyes blazing, his big lips parted as with an oath, and — With a cry of terror she jumped up.

She did not know John Ganton, and had never seen him except at a distance. Was it possible that this vision of hatred and rage was some subtle reflection from the weak face of the son? How could she have imagined it? Where could she have seen it?

CHAPTER XI

A GLASS OF WINE

ONE Sunday afternoon, if pleasant, is very much like another at the Park Club during the summer: the same young men playing tennis or boating; the same young people sitting about on the verandas and lawn, saying, no doubt, much the same things,—there is so little originality about a club. Club conduct is substantially the same the world over,—threadbare subjects and threadbare reputations, threadbare friendships and threadbare loves, threadbare engagements and threadbare marriages, threadbare differences and threadbare divorces,—the very atmosphere exhausted and stale.

At each of the dozen or more tables, groups of young people were seated, drinking different concoctions; few because they were thirsty, more from habit or weak submission to idiotic custom.

The tables were sloppy, and here and there pieces of lemon peel and bent and broken straws betrayed the carelessness of the waiters.

“How perfectly lovely the lake is to-day.”

“Beautiful day.”

“Chicago is a great summer resort.”

“I rather guess — New York is not in it. I was down there last week; hotter than blazes.”

“Well, it was hot here last week.”

“Never lasts more than three days, though.”

“That’s right; the lake breeze helps out.”

Ganton & Co.

"Whose yacht is that?"

"Axford's."

"No; I mean the one —"

"Strikes me the water is pretty cold for bathing."

"Oh, they go in every Sunday afternoon."

"When the crowd is here to see them?"

"That 's about it."

"She 's the limit."

"Who is she?"

"Why, don't you know? She 's —" The voices fell.

"You don't say so. Who brought her here? There will be a row if Mrs. —"

"Have another drink?"

"Seltzer lemonade for me this time,— too hot for anything stronger."

"High-ball."

"Waiter, three high-balls and a lemonade."

"What machine you driving now?"

And so on, — such the stereotyped remarks, the current coin, the small change of conversation.

"Whose boat is that ahead?" exclaimed a young woman in pink, pointing eagerly to the small yachts scudding along under the fresh breeze.

"Don't know," said her companion, sucking away at the straws in his glass. "Looks like Smithers's."

"Oh, I do hope he 'll win," the young woman in pink exclaimed enthusiastically — and immediately forgot all about the yacht race and Smithers's fate.

At another table they were discussing the prospects of an engagement between two young people who had been seen at the Club three successive Saturday afternoons.

A Glass of Wine

"She could n't do better," was the charitable remark of one of the young women.

"I'm not so sure about that. She's a stunning girl," replied one of the young men.

"Stunning? Well, I can't see where that comes in,"—the young woman turned up her nose at the thought; "if a girl dresses loud and talks slangy you all call her stunning."

"I guess it'll make a match all right enough," the young fellow remarked, as he tipped back his chair and thrust his hands into his pockets.

Some one called to one of the waiters and asked:

"Who are going to dine here this evening, do you know?"

"I can't just say, sir; there are several parties. I can find out, sir."

"Find out who has the corner table."

In a moment the man returned: "That is Mrs. Wilton's table, sir."

Whereupon this particular group fell to discussing Mrs. Jack in terms which must have made one of her ears burn fiercely.

"I'll bet a penny Jack is not of the party," exclaimed one of the men, and they all laughed.

"He's a rattling good fellow, too," said another.

"Just a trifle heavy."

"Well, I can't understand how he tolerates some things that go on under his very nose," remarked a sharp-faced young matron.

"They say May has landed Will Ganton at last,—they are really engaged," said the young man who had inquired about the table.

"Well, I don't believe it," spoke up the sharp-faced

Ganton & Co.

young matron; "he wouldn't be such a fool as to marry her."

"Strikes me it's the other way,—she is too deucedly clever to marry him."

"She'd be glad enough to get him for his money."

People came and went,—more women than men, for many of the latter were at the country clubs playing golf. Everybody looked up as each newcomer made his or her appearance, and conversation at each of the small round tables immediately shifted to the newly arrived,—which was a large part of the amusement of the afternoon. There was, in fact, little else to do for those who did not play tennis or go on the water; no one ever thought of reading, thinking, or just sitting still in the presence of the restless Lake, over which lights and shadows in endless variety played from hour to hour, and the surface of which reflected a thousand iridescent hues.

It was late in the afternoon when Mrs. Jack and her sister drove up in a victoria, with coachman and footman in spotless and somewhat conspicuous livery. The two sisters were dressed in white, but while May Keating carried a white parasol, Mrs. Jack's was of a brilliant red.

"One can tell Mrs. Jack a mile off," said the sharp-faced young matron.

"Rather a striking turn-out," some one remarked.

"Did you ever see such horses?" another woman said in an envious tone.

"Tries to be conspicuous," said another, whose one man not only served as coachman, caring for two horses and the stable, but also cleaned floors, rugs, and windows, swept walks, took care of the furnace, and froze the ice-cream

A Glass of Wine

Sundays, besides attending door in a second-hand swallow-tailed coat whenever his services were required. As most of Mrs. Jack's acquaintances relied upon one such general utility man, they were accordingly envious of her extravagance and love of display; few had two men on the box, and most of these dressed up their stable-boys or housemen to serve as footmen. It was therefore impossible to tell in many a household whether the dinner was being served by a stable-hand, or the carriage door opened by the butler, with the chances in favor of both alternatives.

The afternoon at the Club down town had materially raised the spirits of Will Ganton, so that when he drove up in a cab a little before seven, he met May Keating very much as if nothing had occurred.

Delaney not only considered it good policy from his own point of view to aid Mrs. Jack in making this match, but, on the whole, he believed it a good thing for the two people immediately concerned. Would not everybody say May Keating had made a great catch, and that Will Ganton was lucky to get so clever and handsome a girl?

Leaving Will Ganton with Mrs. Jack, who was already surrounded by a throng of gallant admirers, Delaney and May walked slowly across the lawn to the far side of the grounds. The tennis-courts were now deserted; the players had scattered, some for their homes, others to get ready for dinner.

Seating themselves on one of the benches, May leaned her elbows on her knees, and made holes in the sod with the tip of her parasol. For several minutes neither said a word. Delaney watched her closely, noting the expression of weariness in her face, and the nervous irritation with which she played with her parasol. At length he asked quietly:

Ganton & Co.

"Well, May, what's up?"

Smiling bitterly she answered, "It is all up, I guess, Larry."

"Lovers' quarrel," he commented laconically.

"It takes two to make a lovers' quarrel," she said slowly.

"When did it all happen?"

"To-day,— after luncheon."

"Sudden squall,— soon blow over," he said encouragingly.

"It is n't to-day, or yesterday," she exclaimed earnestly, "it is the to-morrow I am afraid of. It is the every day of the years to come; the every hour of the endless weeks. At times it seems to me as if I just could not do it." There was a ring of despair in her voice which appealed to Delaney.

"You don't love him?" he asked gently.

"No," she answered slowly.

"Do you dislike him?"

"No; on the contrary I rather like him. Before there was any question of love I liked him very much. There is something likable about him, but nothing lovable,— you understand what I mean."

"I think I do, and let me tell you, May," he spoke with the assurance of knowledge, "the likable man makes a much safer husband than the lovable. May I use myself as an illustration? Would you call me a likable man?" She shook her head, smiling. "No; for women either love or hate me; for the most part they dislike me cordially. To you I am companionable because — because possibly I am more than half in love with you myself. But you would not marry me, you would not dare take the risk;" his lip curled cynically. "With Will Ganton you take no risk; you know

A Glass of Wine

what he is. His good and bad points are plain to be seen; you know just the kind of husband he will make, just the sort of husband that nine-tenths of American business men make — husbands who attend to business and find their recreation in commercial and club life, leaving social duties to their wives — safe sort of husbands; dull, heavy, stupid at dinners, impossible at afternoon teas. But they do stay at home and manage things while their families are in Europe or making a splurge at some resort. As a patient and long-suffering beast of burden, the American husband has not his equal the world over. He is the only man with whom the clever, brilliant, ambitious American women can possibly live on terms of peace. She is the fine fruition of social conditions which foster independence, originality, ambition, and resourcefulness mixed with a certain amount of unscrupulousness in the attainment of ends. The same conditions have produced men like Will Ganton to meet her financial requirements, and support her in careers wherein they play obscure parts. You have taken it into your head that you must marry for love. You are foolish. Rather than marry for love the safer rule would be never to marry while in love. Love is a species of insanity, a mental aberration, an overwhelming impulse to do the foolish thing. The law should not permit people to enter into a contract so important as that of matrimony while laboring under the illusions and delusions of love.”

May Keating could not but laugh at the extravagance of Delaney's theories, and the sobriety with which he uttered them. In spite, however, of their extravagance, she derived a certain amount of consolation from what he said; for it was undeniably true that some of her most intimate friends

Ganton & Co.

who had married for love were unhappy, while most of those who had been influenced solely by more practical considerations seemed quite contented. But she could not help asking herself if the rule held good for all classes, and her answer was emphatically in the negative; in all but those exclusive circles which form polite society, love is absolutely essential to happy marriages.

"You are speaking," she said reflectively, "of the exclusive few — of the smart set. How about the multitude?"

"Oh! the multitude; that is very different. The multitude have their own code, we have ours; if they did not marry for the animal attraction they call love, they would not marry at all. With us it is different. Among the reasons which impel the society woman to marry, love is quite overshadowed; other considerations, pro and con, are so much more important. If love were the only consideration you would not think of marrying at all, for just now you are not in love; but you are compelled to consider the matter by circumstances over which you have no control. You are bound to marry soon; you cannot help it. Knowing that, you have surveyed the field of eligibles, and, like a shrewd, practical young woman, have chosen a man whose prospects are brilliant even if he is not; and, like a sensible young woman, you are not going to let slight differences interfere with your plans. At the appointed time you will march down the aisle to the strains of Lohengrin, and make your vow to love, honor, and obey the man who will love, honor, and most emphatically obey you."

In the depth of her being she felt sure it would all turn out exactly as he said; that neither she nor Will Ganton had very much to say about it. Yet this thought, this feeling of help-

A Glass of Wine

lessness, irritated her and stirred within her the spirit of revolt. Why should she tamely submit, be led like a lamb to the altar? Why should she not rebel even to the flinging of propriety to the winds by doing something outrageous?

At dinner Will Ganton drank rather more champagne than was good for him, and he did not appear to advantage. Under the influence of the wine he became talkative, and soon his loud voice and laughter attracted the attention of all in the room.

"Ganton is feeling pretty good to-night," a young fellow at one of the tables remarked to his companions, three men about his own age.

"He looked glum enough before dinner," said one of the others.

"May be a case of drinking to drown sorrow," the first responded with a wink.

"Can't see what he has to feel blue about with a girl like May Keating in love with him."

"She does n't look as if she were very much in love; that may be the trouble," and they all turned and looked at her.

May Keating was conscious of the looks and secret comments, and felt annoyed. She was so accustomed to having people stare at her and talk about her, that ordinarily she did not even notice it; but now to be made the subject of comment and conjecture because Will Ganton was acting like a fool was intolerable.

In vain Mrs. Jack motioned the waiter to serve no more wine; Will called for it so loudly he could not be denied. Only the four were at the small oblong table, but unfortunately Delaney was at the end opposite Ganton, so he could exercise no restraining influence, and could neither do nor

Ganton & Co.

say anything without others observing him, which would lead to disagreeable consequences. Left to drink as he pleased, Will Ganton invariably became more and more boisterously good-natured; if, however, he thought any one was trying to restrain him, it made him ugly, so ugly that once in a restaurant he had struck a well-meaning friend full in the face with his heavy fist, knocking him to the floor senseless. It was not often he drank to excess; he had not formed the habit, and really did not care very much for champagne or wine of any kind, but at times, when laboring under some mental depression or from physical exhaustion, he felt a craving for stimulants.

May Keating looked at him, her eyes and compressed lips showing her disgust and anger; not that a man in the maudlin stages of intoxication was a novel sight, but to have him get drunk at their table, in the presence of a room filled with people they knew, under the observation of women who were enjoying her discomfiture, was an affront she could not stand.

In a voice plainly audible some distance away, she said:

“Mr. Ganton, don’t you think you have had all the wine that is good for you?”

She did not mince matters, but put the question as pointedly and directly as she could. For a few seconds he did not grasp the full significance of her question, but smiled stupidly and lifted his glass as if to drink her health. When he finally comprehended, his face became first red, then almost purple with anger, the veins of his neck swelled, and his thick lips parted as if to say something coarse; he dropped his hand, spilling the wine, and looked at her with his eyes half shut, as if trying to concentrate all his wandering faculties upon the object of his rage.

A Glass of Wine

Without the slightest fear, she kept her eyes fixed upon his until she saw them waver as if to avoid hers, saw the thick lips tremble; and instead of the outburst of fury the others expected, he muttered something no one heard, fumbled a moment with his napkin, struggled to his feet and left the room.

The dining-room was silent. Even the waiters paused in their places, feeling something extraordinary had occurred. May Keating sat resting her chin in her left hand, nervously playing with a spoon with her right.

Delaney was the first to break the oppressive silence, by leaning over and whispering to Mrs. Jack:

"Let us go."

She nodded a quick assent, said something to her sister, and they left the dining-room by the door opposite that through which Will Ganton had just passed.

One could almost hear a great sigh of relief as they disappeared, and in an instant every one was talking.

"That's the end of that little affair," said the sharp-faced young matron, smiling with satisfaction, and her opinion was echoed from all sides.

"They'll be lucky if it does n't get into the papers," said one young fellow, glancing around. "There's Miss Evermore — they say she does society for the *Times*, and she took it all in."

"She won't mention it for fear it would hurt the Club, and everybody would be down on her if she did." It was one of the board of governors who spoke, but he looked at the keen-eyed young woman apprehensively.

The two sisters exchanged hardly a word as they drove home. Mrs. Jack was disappointed and chagrined; May

Ganton & Co.

Keating felt humiliated. She knew that occasionally Will Ganton drank too much,—everybody knew that,—but she also knew from carefully veiled inquiries that he was by no means a drunkard, and she had been led to believe his occasional lapses were upon convivial occasions, when many a man with a weak head drinks more than he should. She had never heard of his becoming intoxicated at the Club; and to think that he should have made such an exhibition of himself while dining with her in a room filled with people, most of whom would gloat over her sister's and her own embarrassment! She felt the blood rush to her cheeks from shame and indignation, felt it surge back to her heart as she became white with anger. She could not say anything to her sister; what was there to say? Just as they neared the house Mrs. Jack made a feeble attempt to excuse Will Ganton, stammering something about “quarrel — depressed — misunderstood,” but May interrupted her sharply.

“There is no need of discussing the matter, for there is nothing to be said,” and she went to her room and locked the door.

Will Ganton did not go home that night, nor was he at the Yards all the next day. Browning was anxious, and John Ganton's face a thunder-cloud; he ordered the indebtedness at the bank satisfied, because he knew that sooner or later he would be obliged to pay it; but as he gave the necessary instructions to Browning he said gloomily:

“This is the last time, Browning, I will make good his losses; if he gets in trouble again he may go to the devil.”

The old man wheeled about in his chair and looked out

A Glass of Wine

on the street; the morning was hot, and he was in his shirt sleeves with his vest thrown open, his collar unbuttoned and flaring. His head dropped down into his shoulders, and for the first time in his life Browning thought John Ganton began to show signs of age.

A little later Browning had occasion to go into the private office, and to his astonishment the old man still sat looking out of the window, the papers on his desk untouched; this was so unusual Browning could not help exclaiming: "Mr. Ganton, don't you feel well?"

Turning with a start, he hastily picked up the papers before him, as if ashamed of being caught idle.

"Why yes, I'm all right, Browning. My stomick's a little out of kilter, but"—and he leaned back from his desk—"I was thinking what would become of Ganton & Co. if anything happened to me. Who would take my place?"

There was a pathetic ring to the old man's voice. The great business of Ganton & Co. was his baby; he had watched it grow from nothing; fathered it, fostered it, nursed it; it was the offspring of his brain and his energy—the greatest business of the kind in the whole world. Competitors had followed in his footsteps, had even tried to win some of his prestige, but he crushed or cowed them until all acknowledged his supremacy. Each year his business expanded; like a ball of snow rolling down a steep hill, it gained in volume as it gained momentum, until in its progress over the face of the globe it was now so far beyond control that it must go on and on and on, or disintegrate if brought to a standstill.

There had been a time when he felt he was master of the business, but now the vast organization swept him along

Ganton & Co.

as irresistibly as it carried and provided for the thousands upon thousands of employees. There had been a time when he could have sold it, but that was long ago. Who would buy Ganton & Co. now? Who could buy? No one man had the means, no coterie of men would dare try to control the leviathan; for the business had become a living, breathing giant, an industrial monster his structure of mechanical and commercial processes had started into life. Once he might have wound up and liquidated the business if he desired; but that was before the business had acquired strength and will of its own; before it had become so large that to wind it up would spread disaster throughout the country, even to the far ends of the earth.

The courts had referred to the great packing industries as quasi-public corporations, as no longer so exclusively private as to be subject to the caprice of any one man or body of men. Legislatures had passed laws with special reference to these great concerns, until in no less than fifteen States Ganton & Co. maintained lobbies at each session of every legislature, to secure favorable and prevent unfavorable legislation.

There were times when the old man felt his impotency in the presence of the huge industrial mass, the expansion of which was seemingly so irresistible; again he felt his power and gloried in it. For while he was swept along as the captain and crew are carried by a great ship, the organization needed his guidance much as a ship, however huge, needs the control of the captain; and it troubled him to think there was no one to take his place when he should be compelled to step down and out. For a time affairs would go on much the same, the organization was so perfect, the heads of

A Glass of Wine

departments so competent; but without some one to decide with unerring sagacity the questions that came up every day,—questions of policy, questions of contract, questions of immense purchases in the market, of quick sales in distant countries, matters which could no more be debated than emergencies on a field of battle,—what would become of the great business? If Will should turn out a failure, to whom could he look?

Tuesday May Keating received a penitent and remorseful letter from Will Ganton. The letter came just as she was dressing to go for a drive; she read it, tossed it to one side, gave one of her gloves so vicious a pull it ripped; with an exclamation of impatience, she picked up the letter and re-read it. For some moments she stood in front of her dressing-table, so absorbed in thought that, as her eyes rose and she caught a glimpse of herself in the mirror, it startled her as if she had seen a stranger before her; she noted the look of irritation and indecision on her own face, and she was curiously interested. She wondered if the young woman in the mirror, the young woman in hat and street costume, with brown hair and dark eyes, would listen to the appeal in the letter. No, she did not think the woman in the mirror would; she did not look as if she would, for the lines about her mouth were just a little hard, and there was an expression in her eyes she did not quite like. This woman looked as if she could be merciless and cruel when she chose, and she was worldly, that was certain. Why, then, did she hold that open letter in her hand as if undecided what to do? Why did she pick it up and read it a second time?

How long she might have stood there lost in thought it

Ganton & Co.

is impossible to say, for at that moment Mrs. Jack opened the door, saying:

"Come, May, are n't you ready?"

"Yes; in a second. I ripped a glove. There's a letter from Will Ganton," she added carelessly.

"Well, I should say it's time he attempted some sort of an explanation," Mrs. Jack exclaimed, as she eagerly seized the letter and proceeded to read it. When finished she looked up with the remark:

"Not bad. You were pretty hard on him. He is penitent enough, that's certain. . . . What are you going to do about it?" She looked at her sister anxiously.

"I don't know. Nothing, I guess," was the uncertain response.

"You will have to answer it."

"Why?" There was a marked accent of irritation. "I can let the matter drop as it is, can't I?"

"Of course, of course you can, dearie; but I think a letter like that deserves an answer. It is not a crime to get drunk," Mrs. Jack continued apologetically.

"It is worse than a crime to get drunk when dining in public with ladies. It reduces them to the level of —" she hesitated, and her sister hastened to interpose.

"Of course there is no excuse. It was outrageous, and I intend to give him a piece of my mind at the first opportunity; but I think you ought to write him and tell him that — that —"

"What?" asked her sister calmly. Mrs. Jack did not know what she would tell him, or rather, she knew very well that she would tell him to come back and all would be forgiven; and that that was what she wanted her sister to

A Glass of Wine

write, only she did not dare say it in so many words. But May knew perfectly well what was passing in Mrs. Jack's not very subtle mind; she knew that ever since the dinner her sister had been hoping something might be done to heal the breach. She had set her heart on this match, and did not propose to be balked.

"Well, let us go. I am ready," May suddenly exclaimed, as she quickly buttoned her glove.

Mrs. Jack hesitated. "Are n't you going to answer the letter?"

"No, not now. There will be time enough later. Let us go."

There was something in the tone which made Mrs. Jack feel as if the victory were won. She knew that the woman who debates always answers.

Half-way up the outer drive they saw Delaney walking with Mrs. Trelway.

"I don't like that woman," Mrs. Jack exclaimed in a tone of annoyance.

"Who? Oh, Carrie Trelway," said her sister, looking up and catching sight of the two on the walk.

"Horribly vulgar," continued Mrs. Jack, and her round face expressed her disgust

"Because she is walking with Larry Delaney?" was the rather cutting rejoinder.

"No; of course not. What a mean thing to say, May. She says such disagreeable and indecent things, I can't see how people tolerate her."

When the victoria drew up alongside the curb so she might speak to them, Mrs. Jack's face was wreathed in the blandest of smiles.

Ganton & Co.

"I'm so glad to see you, Mrs. Trelway."

"You did not look so pleased a moment ago," was the blunt rejoinder. Mrs. Trelway looked at Mrs. Jack boldly and laughed at her confusion. "Heard all about the time you had at the Club Sunday night, May," she continued, turning suddenly to May Keating, who was leaning back with an air of bored indifference; "sorry I was not there to help you take care of the young man."

"Yes; your experience would have been helpful." Every one knew Billy Trelway's many weaknesses.

"Oh, Billy is the best fellow in the world when he is drunk. You can do anything with him," was the perfectly frank rejoinder. No one could feaze Mrs. Trelway by references to the shortcomings of either her husband or herself; her self-possession being of that adamant character which defies attack. "I suppose," she continued lightly, "Will and Billy are a good deal alike, more interesting drunk than sober."

Delaney listened with an amused expression, which added to Mrs. Jack's irritation. She was furious, and all the more so because she could think of nothing to say that could disturb the equanimity of Mrs. Trelway. Apparently May Keating was quite indifferent, for she sat there with the same bored expression. Delaney admired her self-possession, and said to himself, "By Jove! but you are a great girl."

As the victoria drove on, Mrs. Trelway turned to him and, as if divining his thoughts, said:

"You are right, Larry, she is a stunning girl,—but no wife for Will Ganton."

"Why?" he asked, curious to know her reasons for the conviction so positively expressed.

A Glass of Wine

"Because they would both go to the devil if married," she answered positively

"I don't see that," he remarked slowly.

"Of course you don't,—no man would see it,—but they are no more fitted for one another than oil and water,—they won't mix. He is not a bad fellow in his way, rather likable; and I wish him better luck than to marry May Keating."

"Are n't you rather down on her?" he protested.

"Not at all; she is a stunning girl — that is just the word for her — stunning, and she ought to marry a man like you. Why don't you marry her, Larry?" She brought her heavy eyebrows even nearer together, and gave Delaney so searching a look that he dropped his eyes in some confusion.

"I —" he stammered, "why, I have no intention of marrying. I cannot afford to — besides," he continued, recovering his equanimity, "she would not have me."

"She might be wise there; nevertheless, she needs a husband with some of your brilliant and unscrupulous characteristics."

"Thanks," he said, nettled. There were times when Mrs. Trelway was too outspoken to suit even him. What could she mean by "unscrupulous characteristics"? Nor did he feel much more at ease when she continued, coolly:

"Oh, that is nothing. We all have our unscrupulous sides, and some of us have more than one. You, I take it, are especially favored, since most clever men are. We are all criminals more or less veneered, and it is the lawless element in us that makes life worth living,—worth living to those who indulge it, better worth living to those who con-

Ganton & Co.

quer it; but inane and insipid to those who so far obliterate it that they no longer feel the contest between the evil and the good."

"You believe, then, in the virtue of sin?" he suggested.

"Yes; for how can there be any virtue without sin? Are they not relative terms? The one is simply the contrast which makes the other perceptible."

"All of which is interesting; but how would you apply these general observations to Will Ganton and myself, the two cases under discussion?"

"Will Ganton needs a wife of good common sense, domestic tastes, stubborn and phlegmatic disposition. You follow bad impulses from choice, and even cultivate them to secure more exquisite enjoyment. The woman who married you to reform you would waste her life; what you need is a wife who will not mourn over your follies, but match them with her own, and so live with you on terms of perfect understanding and more or less accord."

"And you think May Keating that sort of a woman?" Mrs. Trelway's direct manner of putting things interested him; she certainly saw the people about her very clearly.

"She is just the wife for a man like you,—only the man who marries her must have money."

"That bars me," he interrupted, smiling grimly.

"Oh, you are clever enough to make money, Larry Delaney." She looked at him sharply.

"I have been trying a long time, and so far have only enough to keep the wolf from the door."

"You may not be trying in the right way. The trouble with you is that you try to do everything by your wits; you are too clever for your own good."

A Glass of Wine

She did not know how near her random shots came to the bull's-eye, but he hastened to change the subject; he had no desire to discuss his personal affairs with a woman so keen. He knew he had his enemies, and that some of them did not hesitate to say very sharp things about him and his business methods. Billy Trelway himself was one of those who had lost considerable sums trading through him, but whether Billy had ever questioned the regularity of the transactions he did not know. But it was more than likely that Mrs. Trelway knew of the losses and probably of the rumors, since she knew everything that was worth knowing and much that was not. At one time she was in the habit of asking him to invest a little money for her in the market; and while her investments had been successful in nearly every instance, she suddenly stopped speculating through him, though he was certain she still did so occasionally through others.

Every successful speculator is annoyed by these social customers. Some Larry Delaney could not refuse without offending, and there were others whom he wished under obligations to him; but though it had cost him several thousands of dollars to carry these clients and protect them from losses, the money he thought well spent in most instances, and not altogether wasted in any.

He could even point out the jewels, the hats, the gowns, his money had bought; for women invariably put their winnings into some particular thing they want, and exhibit the purchase to friends as the result of their sagacity.

CHAPTER XII

AN ANONYMOUS LETTER

WHEN John Wilton came home about five o'clock that afternoon, he looked over the mail on the hall table, picked out his own letters, and went upstairs to the nursery. It was his habit as soon as he entered the house to hunt up his boy; many days that was about all he came home for, just to see the little fellow and have a romp with him. They were great chums.

As he opened the door he heard an indignant little voice shouting:

"'Oo told a lie,—I hate 'oo — I hate 'oo,—I won't speak wiv 'oo. Go away — go away," and he saw Harold struggling with the French governess, a young woman he did not like. The moment the little fellow caught sight of his father he tore himself away and rushed into Wilton's arms; all his rage welled into tears, and he sobbed as if his little heart would break.

"What 's the matter, Major? What has happened?"

The governess began a confused explanation in broken English, that the boy would not speak to her in French; "and Monsieur, he know, eet ees Madame's wish zat he spik French all ze time wiz me."

"She told a lie — she told a lie. I won't speak wiv her!" the little fellow cried out between his sobs.

Wilton looked at her. For just a second her eyes dropped, but she looked up brazenly and said nothing.

An Anonymous Letter

"What does he mean by saying you told a lie?" he finally asked.

Shrugging her shoulders, she replied indifferently, "*Je ne sais pas.*"

"'Oo do know — 'oo do know. 'Oo know 'oo told a lie," shouted the boy, hugging his father tightly about the neck, but at the same time looking fearlessly at the governess. Her face assumed a hard and ugly look.

"You may go," said Wilton quietly, "I will inquire into the matter."

"I prefere to stay, eef he ees to say zings about me," she said stubbornly.

"You may go," he repeated, and this time so sternly she turned and left the room; but as she did so he heard her mutter something about "Madame." He knew from past scenes that Mrs. Jack would take the part of the French woman against Harold and himself. Time and again he had tried to get rid of her, but her influence over his wife seemed something unaccountable. He hated to have his boy with her; but when he expostulated with Mrs. Jack she sharply asked, "Why?" and because he could give no very definite reasons, said impatiently, "Just one of your prejudices. You don't like her because she is French. Well, the child must have a French governess, and that is all there is to it."

He could not see why they should take into their home a young woman whose antecedents were not only unknown, but apparently wrapped in mystery, whose account of her own life and the reasons why she came to America were so vague and conflicting as to challenge suspicion, and whose conduct while in their service had not been above criticism. He once said gently, "You would not employ a cook or

Ganton & Co.

maid without some sort of recommendation,— without knowing where she had worked; is it not just as important to know something about the girl who is to live in the same room with our boy? ”

But it did no good: Mrs. Jack was bound to have a French governess; it was the thing to do, and that was sufficient.

From the moment the strange girl entered the house, Harold hated her. That pleased his father, but it brought the little fellow many a sharp word from his mother. As for the governess, she paid no attention to the child's aversion, but steadily ingratiated herself with Mrs. Jack until she felt she was an indispensable factor in the household.

When the girl was out of the room, Wilton said soothingly:

“Tell papa all about it, Major,” using his pet name, as “Harold” seemed too ponderous for such a little shaver, “Harry” too slangy, but “Major” just expressed him. “What did she say? ”

“She told a lie. She said mamma did n't love 'oo, and zen she laughed.”

Wilton felt something tighten about his heart at hearing this from his own child. He pulled nervously at his mustache and looked at the boy, wondering if he understood the significance of what he was saying; but all he saw were the big blue eyes, still filled with tears, looking frankly into his own, and he knew no suspicion of the truth had entered the little curly head.

“I guess she was fooling,” he said slowly; “she did n't mean it.”

“Oh, 'ess she did, for she said mamma loved some one else better zan she loved 'oo.” In his anger and excitement

An Anonymous Letter

the sounds of "th" and "y" were too much for his little tongue.

Wilton's face flushed with shame and anger, to think the woman had put such notions into the head of his boy, his baby; he knew she had done it spitefully to wound him. Perhaps she had not counted on the little fellow's resentment, but probably thought he would repeat what she said as a careless remark which she could deny if called to task.

For a moment he thought of hunting her up and ordering her from the house instantly, but felt that would not do. It would create a scene, and only make bad matters worse,—in fact, it was altogether likely she would refuse to go at his command, but coolly say she had been engaged by Madame. Besides, what reason could he give for her sudden dismissal? He could not say she had said his wife loved another better than him; it would sound too ridiculous.

Before these conflicting considerations one resolution after another faded away, and he sat there so silent and gloomy that little Harold was afraid to utter a word; he had never before seen his father's face look like that.

"She must go, and go at once," he kept repeating to himself, as if by repetition he strengthened his determination and made her dismissal sure. "I will speak to Sally as soon as she comes in, and she must get her out of the house to-day,—yes, to-day. She shall not see the boy again." The thought that she would ever again speak to Harold caused the blood to rush to his face, and he pulled his moustache viciously.

"W'at 's ze matter, papa?" was the timid inquiry. "'Oo look sick."

"Nothing — nothing much, Major. Papa is not sick."

Ganton & Co.

The little fellow brightened up and exclaimed, confidently,

"It was a lie, was n't it, papa?"

That cut, and it cut deep. "Of course, Major; she should not say such things. No one should say such things," — he hesitated,—"whether true or false."

"I don't like her, papa. I hate her."

"Must n't say that, Major. Hate is a naughty word. You don't hate any one."

"'Ess I do. I hate her; I don't hate any one else, not even ze boy who frew stones at Buzzer. Won't 'oo send her away, papa?"

"Yes, dear, she shall go. Where is mamma?"

"Mamma's out dwiving wiv Aunt May. 'Oo send her away before mamma tums back." He felt instinctively that his mother would not discharge the governess, no matter what she had done.

"Can't do that, darling. Mamma would not like it; but don't you be afraid, she shall go."

Still holding the little fellow on his knee, Wilton in an absent-minded manner began opening his letters. He knew they were of no importance, mostly bills, receipts, advertisements, and he scarcely glanced at them, until suddenly his attention was arrested by one which contained simply a sheet of plain note-paper, on which were pasted letters cut from a newspaper, which read:

"JOHN WILTON, Esq.— If you will watch your wife and Lawrence Delaney a little more closely you will discover things that will interest you.

A FRIEND."

It was an anonymous letter,—the most contemptible and cowardly of all attacks. John Wilton detested such things,

An Anonymous Letter

and had always said they should be burned and forgotten immediately. He knew there were seasons when they were epidemic, like typhoid, diphtheria, and other infectious and contagious diseases; that frequently neighborhoods were persecuted, and not only men and women, but even young girls just out in society, were made the victims of some malicious or disordered brain. In rare instances the writers were exposed and prosecuted; more often they were suspected and shunned. John Wilton had always felt sure that if he ever received such a communication, he would tear it up without giving it a thought. Now, face to face with the literal fact, the thing seemed different; possibly because it came with cumulative force upon what the governess had said only a few moments before. It caught him in a moment of depression, when he was off his guard, and the shaft went home.

"What a funny letter, papa," Harold exclaimed, looking with childish curiosity at the sheet of note paper, with its printed letters awkwardly pasted together.

Hastily folding the letter, Wilton put it in his pocket; it was so contaminating he was sorry the child had seen it.

"It is nothing, Major. Some one pasted those letters on the paper for — fun, I guess."

"I 'm doin' to write a letter like zat to mamma. Where 's ze mooslage?" He jumped down, and ran as fast as his little legs would carry him to the desk in the corner where he kept his writing materials, his paper and pencils,— he was not allowed ink,— and a bottle of very gummy "mooslage," which he kept for mending dolls, and "tickin fings togedder" generally.

Wilton knew there was no use trying to divert him. The

Ganton & Co.

novelty of the letter had completely taken his childish fancy, and he would not rest until he had written one like it to every one in the house. He was a great letter-writer; but of late making scrawls on papers, sealing them up and giving them to the postman, who good-naturedly handed them in with the regular mail, had lost its charm. Now this new way of writing aroused his flagging enthusiasm, and he would begin all over.

"I s'all wite Aunt May, and mamma, and — oh, 'ess, I s'all wite Mister Delaney a dood long letter, and tell him to bwing me anuzzer box of tandy wight away."

"No, no," Wilton exclaimed earnestly; "no, Major, you must not write Mr. Delaney that sort of a letter."

"W'y not, papa?" he looked up, his big blue eyes wide open in amazement that his father should not want him to write to Mr. Delaney. He always wrote him letters, and always got whatever he wrote for, the two were such good friends.

"Papa does not want you to write Mr. Delaney any more." Wilton spoke so quietly and so sadly that the little fellow looked at him wonderingly. "Write me the letter and I will bring you the 'candy," he continued, in the effort to divert the set purpose of the determined little mind.

"Will 'oo bwing ze same kind as ze last box?" was the doubtful and somewhat suspicious inquiry.

"Yes, of course. What was the last box?"

"Toklate solders wiv wed and w'ite tandies for flags."

"That's all right, Major, we'll have the chocolate soldiers and the red and white candies to-morrow. You need not write me the letter."

"Oh, 'ess, I must."

An Anonymous Letter

"Well, remember, don't write any letter to Mr. Delaney — ever again. Write me for whatever you want."

Wilton was surprised to find himself wondering where he could find such extraordinary candies. He did not remember having ever seen chocolate soldiers with red and white flags, but he would visit every confectioner's in the city if necessary. Suppose Delaney had bought them in New York — it was quite likely, for he was fond of giving novelties — what then? These thoughts were running through his brain as freely as if his mind were not wholly occupied by more serious matters. What should he do about the governess and the letter? Those were the real problems, and not the whereabouts of the chocolate soldiers and the red and white candies; yet the latter obtruded itself whenever he was about to come to a decision regarding the more important matter.

When Mrs. Jack returned, Wilton went at once to her room, closed the door carefully behind him, and said in a constrained voice,

"I want to have a little talk with you, Sally."

His manner was so unusual, and his tone so unfamiliar, that she turned and looked at him in surprise. The time was not favorable for a talk. Mrs. Jack was decidedly out of sorts; meeting Mrs. Trelway had quite upset her; but John Wilton did not know all this, and did not even raise his eyes to look at her when she asked irritably,

"Well, what is it now?"

He had seated himself and was looking at the curled-up corner of the rug. He tried to turn it back with the toe of his shoe, but it would not stay flat. He knew his wife was standing there glaring at him angrily. It was what she

Ganton & Co.

always did when he attempted to remonstrate with her, but he did not care, now that the time had come for him to speak plainly,— if the corner of that rug would only stay down, he could go on.

“When you get through fussing with that rug I hope you will say something, or —”

That was all that was necessary to recall him to himself. Looking straight at her, he said quickly,

“The governess must go.”

“Indeed, what is the matter now?”

Without heeding the tone of a question meant to belittle him, he continued,

“She must go, to-day.”

The repetition grated upon her. Her round, pretty face flushed with anger, and with her eyes half shut she took several steps toward him, almost screaming:

“Why must she go to-day? What has she done? What have you to say about it, anyway? I tell you she sha’n’t go to-day or any other day, and I don’t want you to meddle.”

“She has been talking to Harold,” he went on quietly.

“That is what she is hired for, is n’t it?”

“She has said things no decent girl would say to a child.” He spoke more firmly now, and his wife began to wonder what had happened.

“What has she said?” she asked more soberly.

“I do not like to repeat her words, but —” he hesitated, “I suppose there is no other way. She told Harold you did not love me, and that you loved some one else better. It is not that I care about myself, Sally, but to think any girl could be so low as to talk that way to a child!”

An Anonymous Letter

The blood left Mrs. Jack's face, and she felt herself become suddenly pale. For the first time in her married life she felt afraid,—afraid of her husband, afraid of her servants, afraid of herself. The feeling of fear which for the moment overwhelmed her little soul was sickening, and she grew faint. Could it be possible that people really talked about her, that they really knew, that her own servants knew? She had been reckless and imprudent; she had done so many things other women would not do that her own sister had often remonstrated with her, but all this was part of her theory of life. Every woman who amounted to anything had some man at her heels, a social substitute for her husband, and she believed the two should be linked together by a certain amount of gossip; that people should speak of them as "good friends" and inseparable. Beyond that she did not want people to go, realizing that those who endeavored to maintain their social footing on the dizzy pinnacle of notoriety were in danger of bad falls. She desired the notoriety and the doubtful status it gave her without disastrous consequences; and lived in that atmosphere of blind confidence which always surrounds the social transgressor.

Like many a woman with her head in the sand, she believed herself completely hidden from curious observation, and she did not know either what people were saying or how much they really knew. What the governess had said was the first intimation that people were saying ugly things. If her own servants talked so openly, then the matter was serious; for a servant's lie is commonly accepted as the truth.

Mrs. Jack dropped into a chair and sat silent after her husband's last words. He waited for her to speak. Of course she must make light of the matter in some way, as it

Ganton & Co.

was the only thing she could do; but her voice sounded forced and artificial as she said:

"She did not mean it. It is ridiculous. But if she said such an absurd thing, we will discharge her. Harold might have misunderstood her."

"She tried to lie out of it; I was there."

"I — I will send for her at once."

"One thing more, since we are on this subject." John Wilton spoke slowly and with an effort. No one knew how hard it was for him to talk of anything like this. He seemed to feel as if he had no right to do so, as if his wife might suspect some selfish motive, a desire to claim her affection against her will. "I received this letter this afternoon. I would have destroyed it immediately if it had not been for what that governess said to Harold; but if people are talking I think you ought to know, for your own sake — and Harold's."

He handed her the sheet of notepaper with its irregularly pasted letters. She read the words slowly, but instead of being more terrified, by a sudden revulsion of feeling she became furious,—furious to think he would pay any attention to an anonymous letter, furious to think she should be made the subject of that sort of an attack. Jumping up, she shook the letter in his face, screaming: "How dare you show me this nasty, miserable letter? How dare you? There! — there! — there!" and she tore the sheet of paper into a hundred pieces and threw them in his face, stamping her foot with rage as she did so.

Wilton was always afraid of his wife when in one of her fits of temper; he felt she might do anything, for she was like a mad beast. Once she had thrown a paper-weight which just missed hitting him, and crashed into the wall at

An Anonymous Letter

his back; and more than once she had smashed things in fits of ungovernable rage. These moods were usually followed by a flood of tears, and now he waited silently for the reaction; to say a word would, he knew, merely add fuel to the already white-hot flame.

For a moment she stood glaring at him, then her features became convulsed, and with a sob she threw herself on the bed, crying hysterically.

Wilton left the room.

When Mrs. Jack came to herself so she could think, she knew she must do something about the governess, but what could she say to her? What reason could she give for discharging her? She could not tell her it was on account of what she had said to Harold; that was something she could not discuss with the girl,—but what could she say? Perhaps there would be no need of giving any reason. The girl might want to go. Doubtless she did, for otherwise she would not have acted so. That seemed so plausible that she felt more at ease. She hastily picked up the pieces of the letter from the floor, and rang for the governess, all the time trying to reassure herself by mentally repeating, “Of course the girl knew nothing; of course not; how absurd!

Nothing escaped the keen eyes of the governess as she entered the room as stealthily as a cat. She knew there had been a scene between husband and wife, and she was sure she had been the cause of it. Yet no one could have told from her expression that she noticed anything at all unusual; her self-possession was perfect.

Without turning from the dressing-table where she sought to appear as if rearranging her hair, Mrs. Jack said abruptly:

“Mademoiselle, I am sorry, but we shall have to make

Ganton & Co.

a change. I shall not need your services any longer. I will pay you a month ahead."

Without betraying the slightest emotion, the young woman asked in her broken English:

"Pardon, Madame, but may I ask why I am deesmis'?"

"Certainly. We — that is, Mr. Wilton and I — think Harold does not need a French governess just now." Mrs. Jack was so confused that she could see her own confusion in the mirror, and was glad it stood at such an angle that the governess could not see her.

"I am surprise' Madame deed not know zis morning." She was so exasperatingly cool and collected that it irritated Mrs. Jack.

"I talked with Mr. Wilton this afternoon. It is sufficient that we have decided."

"Perhaps Monsieur haf tol' Madame — somezing?"

The accent on the "somezing" was disagreeably significant.

"Yes; he did tell me something," was the sharp retort. Mrs. Jack forgot herself, but paused in time; she did not care to go into that matter.

The governess waited without moving, but there was a hard look about her eyes.

"Somezing I said to —" she said interrogatively, but Mrs. Jack interrupted her sharply:

"There is no need of discussing the matter, Mademoiselle."

"But eef ze ladies ask me why I go, how s'all I say?"

"I don't care what you say," Mrs. Jack answered irritably, her nerves giving away under the continued stress.

"Ver' well, Madame." The response came slowly, as if the girl were trying to find words to express herself to the

An Anonymous Letter

point. "I can tell ze ladies I was deesmis' because I haf seen Madame and Monsieur Delaney togedder so ver' often, and zat I know —"

"Stop!" Mrs. Jack was panic-stricken at the change that came over the face she saw in the mirror. Was it possible those pale and terror-stricken features belonged to her? Why did she look so guilty? She did not dare turn around and face the girl for fear she, too, would see.

"Stop!" she repeated, with an effort at indignation; "not another word. So this is the return you make for all I have done for you."

"It ees Madame who sen' me away. I like to stay wiz Madame, but eef I go I mus' tell w'at I haf see'." The tone was humble, and yet the threat so plain that Mrs. Jack understood perfectly: the price of her silence was an easy position; if discharged she would make trouble.

"Go to your room. I will consider the matter. Perhaps Mr. Wilton will — but go! go! go!" She could stand the strain no longer, and her voice rose almost to a shriek. The girl knew she had won, and with a soft, "Merci, Madame," glided out of the room, closing the door carefully behind her.

During the entire interview Mrs. Jack had not turned from where she stood before her dressing-table, her hand mechanically attempting to arrange her disordered hair; but she no sooner heard the door close than she whirled about and walked back and forth like a caged beast seeking a possible place of escape. "What shall I do? What shall I do?" she kept repeating monotonously. Then she tried to reassure herself by arguing:

"She knows nothing. She can't know anything. There is nothing for her to know. It is all absurd. Why should

Ganton & Co.

"I be afraid?" But another voice whispered: "She would talk, and people would believe her. People always believe anything against a woman. Besides, there is the letter, that anonymous letter. Who could have sent it? Some jealous woman?" She ran over in her mind all her acquaintances, and all Delaney's so far as she knew them. It might be this one, or that one, or the other one,—yes, it might be any one of half a dozen women she could think of, not one of whom would hesitate to do a mean and malicious thing to make her uncomfortable, if there was no chance of exposure. Still the trouble was with the governess, not the letter: why should she care who sent that contemptible note? Any woman might be made the victim of that sort of an attack; no one would pay much attention to an anonymous letter. But the governess,—what could she do about her? She did not dare discharge her. Even if she had said things to Harold she ought not to have said, she would not do that again. No, she would not discharge her at present, but she would find a way to get rid of her without incurring her ill-will. Mrs. Jack persuaded herself such a course was feasible, and she felt easier.

When her husband came into her room just before dinner and asked her what she had done, she was more composed, and explained it was not possible to send the governess off without some notice; that such a course would cast such a reflection upon the girl she would not be able to get another place.

"But I will pay her a month or two ahead, and her expenses to New York,—anything to get her out of the city," exclaimed Wilton.

"That would hardly do. Every one would know she

An Anonymous Letter

was discharged for some reason. Besides, she would talk. Leave it to me and I will manage it somehow."

"I told Harold she should go to-day," Wilton said, as if keeping his word to the boy was of more importance than anything else.

"Well, you should n't have told him anything of the kind," his wife retorted impatiently; "it is none of his business."

Wilton thought it concerned the little fellow more than any one in the house, but he knew from his wife's tone there was no use saying anything more. Moreover, he felt that possibly it would be wiser to get rid of the girl without a scene. To discharge her because she said his wife did not love him would set every one laughing, and saying the girl had simply told the truth. The resolution so firmly taken in the nursery seemed to melt away before these various considerations; he would have to explain to Harold that everything would be arranged by and by. Meanwhile the little fellow should not be with the governess,—that much he would insist upon.

Nothing more was said about the letter. His wife did not mention it, and he did not care to occasion another scene by referring to it, though he did go so far as to suggest in a mild and deferential tone:

"Would it not be wise, Sally,—on Harold's account, I mean,—to see less of Delaney? He's a good fellow, I know," he hastened to add, noting the expression on his wife's face, "and I am glad to have him come here, but, on Harold's account —"

She turned on him furiously: "Never mind Harold. You need n't hide behind him. If you are jealous, speak for yourself without sneaking behind the child."

Ganton & Co.

His face flushed, but he said quietly: "I am not jealous, Sally. I have never interfered with your pleasures, and I'm glad to have you have a good time, but the boy is old enough to notice things, and if the servants talk he will be sure to—"

"‘Servants talk’!" she screamed, echoing his words; "let them talk: what do I care? I can take care of myself, and I will see as much of Lawrence Delaney as I please."

She approached him and shook her finger in his face as if she would like to strike him, her eyes small, and her features bearing the expression of rage that made her look like a vicious little beast.

Wilton did not attempt to answer. He looked down at the floor and unconsciously began once more to try to make the corner of the rug lie flat. It flashed over him he had tried to do the same thing every time he had a dispute with his wife, and this thought diverted him for an instant, but he frowned and concentrated his mind upon the situation which confronted him. His silence did not tend to mollify his wife; on the contrary, it rasped her; it always irritated her. Anger is a flame which feeds on all kinds of fuel.

"If you have nothing more to say I wish you would go and leave me alone," she exclaimed.

He arose without a word and left the room.

Mrs. Jack sent word that she would not be down to dinner. When her sister came to inquire what was the matter, she did not let her in, but simply said she had a bad headache and was going to bed early.

That night when Wilton went in to kiss his boy good-night, the little fellow said:

"Papa, s'e is n't dawn."

"No; not yet, Major, but very soon."

An Anonymous Letter

"I fought 'oo said s'e would do to-day."

"So I did; but you see, Major, mamma can't manage it to-day, but by-and-bye. You won't have to speak French with her any more. Nora will look out for you."

The Major liked Nora, and the prospect of her companionship and the promise of no more French appealed to him. He did not care how long Mademoiselle remained in the house provided he had nothing to do with her; though with a child's inherent despotism he would have liked very much to see her put out bag and baggage,—that would have satisfied his primitive sense of justice.

CHAPTER XIII

EFFORTS TOWARD COMPROMISE

ON the second of August the teamsters went out at the Yards. The firemen followed in sympathy, and as the engineers refused to work with non-union firemen, the shut-down was practically complete at all the large plants.

The Yards were a law unto themselves. For years the growth and prosperity of the city had been so dependent upon the development of the great packing industries, that they were looked upon with special favor, and enjoyed many immunities and privileges not accorded lesser enterprises. Once when the great packers threatened to withdraw and establish new Yards just across the line in Indiana, it so frightened not only the city but the railroads centring in Chicago, that concessions were immediately made to placate the great companies.

As against the public, the Yards ordinarily presented a solid front; as between themselves, employers and employees were on terms of more or less open hostility most of the time. When, however, this condition of hostility assumed the phase of open warfare in the shape of a strike, with all its incidental lawlessness, both sides promptly appealed to the city for aid and to the public for sympathy. In the heat of the controversy grave disclosures affecting public health and safety were made. Each side accused and betrayed the other; and for the time being it seemed as if the devious

Efforts Toward Compromise

and lawless ways of the Yards were about to be exposed. But just as the highly inflamed indignation of the public was getting ready to take concrete form in the shape of indictments and prosecutions of the guilty parties, all controversies were adjusted, all recriminations suddenly ceased, all solicitude for the general welfare evaporated, and the Yards once more retired within itself, and went on with its ancient practices. The men who were fiercest in denouncing their employers for violating all the ordinances of the city and most of the laws of the State, were the first to oppose the authorities when they attempted to meddle.

Considering the atmosphere in which their working lives were spent, the atmosphere of indifference to and contempt for the law, it is small wonder that the men felt as if they could do as they pleased; that, like their employers, they might obey or not obey the law, as they saw fit. The only law-making bodies with power to enforce their decrees the men knew anything about were their labor unions. These were potent organizations, trying offenders in secret and executing them in alleys, in the streets, even in the street cars,—anywhere and everywhere the thug and the slugger could reach them. It was all well enough to talk about police protection, but there were not policemen enough in the city to follow each man to his home and guard him day and night. Besides, every one knew most of the police were in sympathy with the unions.

Hence it was that when the teamsters were called out they went, to a man, though few knew why, and though the great majority were satisfied and did not wish to quit work.

There was talk of a readjustment of the scale of wages and better hours. The officers of the union formulated

Ganton & Co.

their demands, presented them to the packers, and caused them to be published in the papers, together with long statements tending to show that the men were worked and treated worse than slaves; that the average weekly wage of an able-bodied driver was so low he could not hope to support a family decently; and that his hours of work were so long he was given no time for such rest and recreation as is an essential part of the gospel of relaxation preached to-day.

These harrowing pictures were met by the employers. In joint session they appointed an official mouthpiece and press-agent, who compiled endless figures to prove that the teamsters were among the favored sons of industry, and that they received so much and did so little most of them had become fat and lazy.

Each side had its measure of truth. There were teamsters who were lean and poor in both senses of the term; there were others who were well paid, well fed, fat, and lazy; but each side lied so about the other that it was impossible to get at the truth. However, the public, as usual, entered into the controversy with zest, and fanned the flame. The papers published columns of stuff, the exaggerations of the reporters being treated as sober truths in ponderous editorials which few read and none heeded. Numerous conferences were held for the sake of publicity rather than for agreement: there were conferences at which both sides were represented, there were conferences at which only one side was represented, and there were conferences where no one was present, which took place only in the overworked imaginations of the representatives of the press.

Some enterprising young women connected with the Ruskin Settlement, rushing in where angels feared to tread,

Efforts Toward Compromise

simplified matters by suggesting to the packers that they not only yield all the men asked, but go farther and grant all that the young women thought the men ought to ask.

The social reformer is ever aggressive, and in the person of the young woman she is irrepressible. The man who is going to reform the world is content to harangue the multitude from the street corners, or at most to insinuate a leaflet — with a request for a subscription — between door and sill; but the young woman formulates her theories in the club, and lays them hot-baked upon the desk, or quite as likely on the lap, of the offending tyrant. She invades his office, pursues him to his home, dogs his footsteps, interrupts his meals, spoils his digestion. She will not be denied. If she is pretty no one wishes to deny her; but unhappily, she is not often pretty. Handsome women so seldom try to reform the world; the historical rumor is to the contrary. Beauty and reform never go far hand in hand without the latter succumbing. Indeed, a woman's zeal for social regeneration has been said to be invariably inverse to her good looks.

The Ruskin Settlement was an oasis in a desert of poverty, wretchedness, and vice; a leavening influence in a seething mass of degradation. Its band of earnest workers had increased from a few to many. Every young woman who felt she had a mission, and every young man who felt the attraction of young women with missions, joined the Settlement for longer or shorter periods, according to the strength of the conviction and the attraction. Not infrequently the young women and the young men merged their enthusiasms, and devoted their combined efforts to the solution of the matrimonial to the neglect of the less intricate social problem;

Ganton & Co.

thereby unconsciously substituting the egoism of domesticity for a more abstract altruism.

When Miss Higbee Higginson presented herself at the office of Ganton & Co., as the duly accredited representative of the Settlement, and demanded to see John Ganton, she would not be denied. There was no use telling her he was out, for she would wait; there was no use telling her he was busy and could not see her, for the patience and pertinacity of the woman-reformer outlives all engagements. All this was known in the office, for they had had experiences with representatives of the Settlement before, and knew their characteristics. Besides, such was the disposition of press and public toward the Settlement that to refuse to see a representative, even though that representative were a young woman who knew less than nothing about the business in which she was meddling, would be bad policy. Miss Higginson, therefore, was received deferentially, if not cordially.

John Ganton was in his shirt-sleeves, with his waistcoat thrown open and his collar unbuttoned as usual. He swung about in his chair as Miss Higginson entered and seated herself defiantly; though her mission was supposed to be pacific, her manner was bellicose.

"I have come to see you, Mr. Ganton, about this strike at the Yards." Her sharp, shrill voice exasperated the old man. He had no use for reformers, especially reformers in skirts; but he kept his temper and meekly replied:

"Yes, ma'am."

"We think the differences should be arbitrated," she continued.

"Who are 'we,' ma'am?"

"The Ruskin Settlement, Mr. Ganton," she answered

Efforts Toward Compromise

with some exultation in her tone, as if the influence and power of the Ruskin Settlement were too well known in the community to be denied.

"Oh!" That was all he said. Miss Higginson was uncertain just what he meant by the ejaculation, and the doubt annoyed her, so she repeated with additional emphasis:

"We think, Mr. Ganton, the differences should be arbitrated." She looked at him sharply through her eye-glasses to note the effect of the suggestion, but his big red face was impassive to the point of dullness. With one hand he fumbled the papers on his desk, and his small eyes gazed at her almost stupidly from beneath the bushy sandy eyebrows.

"What differences?" the question struck her as extremely stupid

"What differences!" she exclaimed. "Why the differences between you and the men."

"And what are they, ma'am?" The "ma'am" annoyed her,—in the depth of her soul she clung to the belief she was still young.

"You know what the differences are, Mr. Ganton. There is no need for me to enumerate them."

"You will confer a favor, ma'am, if you will mention those you think we ought to arbitrate." He was so deferential in his manner it threw her off her guard, and she replied somewhat helplessly:

"I can't,—that is, I am not prepared to enumerate the differences at this minute. But," she brightened up, "I can confer with the teamsters' committee and let you know."

"Oh!"

"In an hour perhaps, anyway not later than this afternoon," she continued hopefully.

Ganton & Co.

"Oh!"

"And will you arbitrate the differences?"

"Suppose you find there are n't any?" He peered at her with a funny expression in his small eyes, which did not look so sleepy and stupid now.

"Oh, but there are, else there would be no strike," she confidently urged.

"Suppose, ma'am, you find out whether there are any differences and what they are, and then talk about arbitration. You might," he accented the "might" significantly, "conclude the men are in the wrong."

"Oh, that can't be," she exclaimed impulsively.

"Why not, ma'am?" he asked sharply. "Why can't the men be in the wrong as well as the employers? You come here as the representative of the Ruskin Settlement and demand that we arbitrate differences you know nothing about, when you do not even know differences exist. But you assume there are differences, and that the men are in the right and we are in the wrong. Your notions may be all right, but you are meddling in affairs you know nothing about. Before you make suggestions I should advise you to make investigations, and," he added significantly, "for your information, ma'am, I can tell you a strike does not necessarily mean that there are differences between employer and employees which they cannot settle themselves, when they get good and ready to settle."

Miss Higbee Higginson was chagrined. She was even mortified to think she had come on such a mission without first making some inquiries. To hide her embarrassment she said defiantly as she rose to go:

"And so, Mr. Ganton, I am to report that you refuse all

Efforts Toward Compromise

offers of mediation, that you will not arbitrate, that you refuse — ”

“ You may say whatever you — ” the old man caught himself just in time, “ please, so long as you get your name in the papers — that is what you are here for. You and the Ruskin Settlement want a little free advertising, and think this is a good time to get it.”

The old man’s face was red and his small eyes blazed with anger. He had intended to keep cool; Browning had urged him to be diplomatic, but it was no use.

Miss Higbee Higginson was just a little frightened and made a hasty exit from the small office. The afternoon papers all had big “ scare ” head-lines to the effect that the packers were stubborn, that they refused all offers of mediation and arbitration, that they were bent upon disrupting organized labor, and so on, with sensational accounts of the rude reception accorded a representative of the Ruskin Settlement, “ that band of philanthropic men and women, enlightened experts in sociological matters, whose influence for good in the community,” and so on — and on. In all the reports Miss Higbee Higginson figured prominently, and the general impression conveyed was that she had covered herself with a good deal of glory and not a little immortality by bearding the packers in their den, and demanding justice for down-trodden employees.

The example of the Ruskin Settlement was contagious; a strike offers exceptional opportunities for self-exploitation and notoriety.

The Common Council adopted resolutions appropriate to the emergency, and appointed a committee to wait upon the packers — always upon the employers, rather than upon the

Ganton & Co.

men — and urge such concessions as would immediately end the strike. The resolutions did not contemplate asking the strikers — *i. e.*, the voters — to make concessions, it being tacitly assumed they were not only right in their attitude, but, withal, exceedingly modest in their demands.

The enterprising secretary of the National Association for Civic Reform came on from Washington, and made the strike an occasion for calling a national conference of civic and other reformers in Chicago, even offering to intervene personally and officially in the controversy, with a view to giving it the prominence it deserved, and incidentally working out a solution which would redound to the credit and profit of his National Association. The fact that he was at that moment offering to intervene in — to “break into,” as an irreverent labor journal put it — seventeen other strikes, ranging from that of the “dock wollopers” in San Francisco to that of the bobbin-makers in Massachusetts, did not deter him from facing the Chicago situation. His Association had as officers and committeemen prominent politicians enough to settle every strike in the country, and could furnish any number of arbitrators or conference committees on telegraphic notice, as they were kept constantly on hand ready for every emergency, and it was an important part of his business to find or create the emergencies.

The indefatigable secretary was in no wise discouraged when the packers declined his proffered services. He was used to that. His services were commonly declined, often without thanks. If they had been accepted he might have been at a loss just what to do, since, like Miss Higbee Higginson, he had not the remotest idea what the strike was about, and, unlike her, he did not care. Inasmuch as his

Efforts Toward Compromise

services were declined, he knew precisely what to do. He called a convention, and arranged to have every man of prominence in the city who courted publicity preside at some of the numerous sessions, act as one of the two hundred vice-presidents, read a paper, or deliver an address. Such was the sagacity of the experienced secretary that no one was overlooked. Politicians of national, State, and local importance were to be present in name or person, and the affair speedily assumed an importance that quite overshadowed the strike which was its immediate occasion. In fact, the strike was forgotten; and when the great convention was held, lasting an entire day, with three sessions, and a banquet the following evening as a sort of a soft afterglow, only two speakers referred to the strike, and these were hissed for trying to destroy the supreme harmony of the occasion by introducing local matters into debates of national and academic magnitude.

Men from every walk in life were gathered upon the platform: labor-leaders touched elbows with hated capitalists, preachers with the politicians they denounced from their pulpits, doctors, lawyers, and merchants,—all were there, and each was subdued to the occasion. Utterances assumed the complimentary and negative line of polite conversations between foes who happen to meet at a friend's dinner-table. Labor and capital were lauded to the skies as indispensable to and dependent upon each other. Though it was frankly conceded that both might make mistakes, no speaker went so far as to assert that either had ever really done so. If not a feast of reason it was a flow of soul. The head of the American Workingmen's Association clasped hands with the president of the great Bituminous Trust, and in his address

Ganton & Co.

spoke eloquently of "that new era, the dawn of which is even now breaking over the rugged hilltops, when labor and capital shall be united, and shoulder to shoulder stand triumphant before the world." That was the key-note of the assembly, and each speaker played his little variation on the theme. The only discord was when a half-intoxicated delegate from the Workingmen's Club of Englewood blurted out the question:

"How about this strike down at the Yards?"

He was promptly suppressed, and the chairman — one of the leading merchants of the city — expressed the hope that "nothing further would occur to mar the felicity of this great occasion. We are not here," he continued grandly, "to discuss local matters."

"Then what the hell are we here for?" shouted the obstreperous delegate.

The chairman paused as if grieved, and continued firmly: "We are here to discuss questions of the highest general import, questions of sociological significance, questions — questions —" the chairman lost himself in the breadth of his comprehension, but immediately added, grandiloquently, "questions which the world expects us to answer."

He swept his arms about him as if to embrace the universe. There was a hush, in the midst of which the Englewood delegate remarked loud enough for all to hear:

"Rot!"

The convention was considered a great success; before adjourning it passed a resolution — prepared in advance to meet such an emergency — complimenting the secretary for his patriotic and disinterested efforts.

The proceedings filled columns of the city papers, and

Efforts Toward Compromise

were telegraphed broadcast by the Associated Press. The great end, publicity, was attained, and the National Association for Civic Reform had accomplished its purpose. True, it had not brought the packers and the teamsters together, it had not brought any particular workman nearer his particular employer, it had not attempted either of these insignificant ends; but it had brought labor and capital together on the same platform, where they could indulge in platitudes to the edification of the admiring public.

The strike was made the subject of sermons in those churches where the preacher, too, felt the need of publicity; the occasion being especially fruitful to those unattached divines who felt so personally and particularly called by the Lord that they could not be restrained within established orders, but had places of talk of their own. Every American city contains a number of these zealous spirits; a number directly proportioned to the population, some two or three to the million,—for more the papers have not space. They gather their texts from head-lines, their themes from the criminal columns, their inspiration from the events of the day, and they not only keep abreast of the times, but now and then thump it familiarly on the back. They attend meetings, dinners, conferences, and conventions, deliver long invocations, speak when called upon, and if not called upon speak just the same; the narrow confines of their pulpits they find irksome, and they always furnish the papers with outlines of the sermons they intend to deliver. If these worthy men could have agreed they would undoubtedly have called upon the packers in a body, and protested against the tyranny of capital, but unhappily they could not agree concerning either this world or the next. Each, therefore,

Ganton & Co.

separately took it upon himself to settle the strike by visiting one or more of the packers, and urging arbitration or some other popular course. Failing in this mission, each had material for his Sunday's sermon and his Monday's publicity. When the strike did come to an end, and without their assistance, down in their hearts they regretted the loss of good material, for there is no use fulminating against capital when labor says it is satisfied; when the lion and the lamb lie down together the occupation of the shepherd is gone.

When one of the independent pastors forced his way into the house of George Borlan, and urged the settlement of the strike, talking about the needs of the workingman and the beneficent influence of the unions, Borlan lost all patience, and in his nervous way answered:

"Unionism stands for corruption, lawlessness, and plunder. It stands between the employee and the employer with itching palm ready to take the bribe it demands. It has destroyed every relation of confidence, good-will, and esteem between master and man. It has reduced labor to a commodity to be dealt in wholesale. It has destroyed the individuality of the workman by denying him the right to work when, where, and for whom he pleases, as long as he pleases, and for the wages he pleases. It denies the right of the coming generation to work by curtailing the number of apprentices. It denies the right of the ambitious workman to get on by limiting the amount of work he shall do each day. It does all it can to prevent a man from working at more than one trade, fining the gas-fitter if he does the work of the plumber, the bricklayer if he puts a few stones in place, the painter if he hangs a strip of wall-paper. The history of

Efforts Toward Compromise

mankind knows no tyranny so arbitrary, so complete, so oppressive and heartless, as that of the modern trades union over its terrorized members."

"Would you destroy the unions?" asked the amazed pastor.

"Destroy them!" Borlan exclaimed as he paced to and fro. "Why should I, as an employer, destroy them? They cause us some inconvenience now and then, but it is cheaper for us to buy a few leaders than deal with all our men."

"I am surprised, Mr. Borlan, to hear that the employers descend to such corruption."

"Corruption! Corruption!" Borlan fairly shouted; "it is not we who corrupt. You can't corrupt these men,—they are rotten to the core before they ever come to us. They get their positions because they are rotten, because unionism is rotten and needs rotten agents to perform its dirty work. The theory of unionism is rotten, and therefore the practice must be rotten; the men choose their own representatives, and we deal with them on their own terms. It is not for us to tell them they are corrupt, for the men know it, their unions know it, and the court records show it. If one of these men is convicted of selling out his union, and sentenced to the penitentiary, is he repudiated by the unions? No; and you know it. He is hailed as a martyr, reëlected to office, welcomed as a hero, and greeted with wild applause by every union gathering where he appears. Why should we expose and convict when it is cheaper and more popular to buy? Go about in the union headquarters down town, and you will soon learn who are running this strike. Three men, just three men, have the matter in the hollow of their hands."

Ganton & Co.

"If that be so, Mr. Borlan," the worthy pastor interrupted with some emphasis, "and they are as corrupt as you say, why have n't you paid them and stopped the strike?" The good man smiled at the dilemma in which he thought he placed Borlan; the latter hesitated a moment, and said:

"You are now talking of matters which do not concern you. All I can say is the packers are not in business for their health, and they are not fighting strikes as a matter of principle. When they get ready to settle the strike it will come to an end, and not before. Meanwhile you and your associates can go on patting the unions on their backs; but don't forget that a short time ago you were, every man of you, denouncing the livery drivers' union for striking and interfering with weddings and funerals,—your business; from the point of view of the driver, the wage-earner, what difference does it make whether he hauls a corpse, or a bridegroom, or sugar-cured hams? Why have not the livery drivers the same right to strike and make it warm for 'scabs' who take their places at funerals, as our teamsters? If indecent — as you all shouted from your pulpits — to interfere with the burial of the dead, is it not doubly indecent and criminal to interfere with the cartage of food for the living?"

The worthy pastor of independent and sensational proclivities was greatly shocked, and picking up his hat he hurriedly left the house.

CHAPTER XIV

THE WORK OF THUGS

THERE was rioting in the streets whenever the packers attempted to haul goods with non-union teamsters.

The police endeavored to preserve peace with the least possible interference with the rioters. Meanwhile the price of meat steadily advanced from day to day, and the stock accumulated in the warehouses was being disposed of at a handsome profit.

Old John Ganton had numerous conferences with Norberg; of all the conferences held in the city these were the only ones which really meant anything, and they were not reported in the papers.

One evening after a particularly eventful day, wherein two men had been nearly killed and many severely injured, Norberg was closeted with the old man in the private office.

"The tie-up must last two weeks longer, Norberg; can you rely upon Ballard and those two loafers, Scotty and Fanning?"

"They're all right. The leaders will keep the strike going as long as they can. The teamsters' union alone is taking in over forty thousand dollars a week in contributions from other unions. Mighty little of that money will the rank and file get hold of."

"Umph," the old man grunted; "so that's their game, is it?"

"That's where they make their money; strikes pay nowadays."

Ganton & Co.

"We need n't have given them one cent. How much will they collect?"

"If the strike lasts six weeks, the teamsters will gather into their treasury from other unions between two and three hundred thousand dollars, at the very least. In the coal strike, the anthracite union started out with less than thirty thousand dollars in its treasury, and when the strike was called off they had nearly a million. I tell you this striking business is profitable for every one but the men who are out of work, and for the public that foots the bills."

"Well, we must keep up a show of doing business with non-union men."

"Even if a few do get slugged," Norberg interrupted, smiling deferentially.

"That's their lookout; we shall demand more police protection, and there will be talk of calling out the militia; but you tell Ballard and the rascals with him to keep their organization well in hand and stop the slugging. Yesterday things went too far."

"That's just the trouble, Mr. Ganton, the men can't be controlled. They take the matter in dead earnest. Besides, Borlan Bros. are making no end of trouble. They are going right ahead with non-union men, and say they will never take their old men back unless they quit the unions. Allan Borlan is talking pretty plainly."

"Allan Borlan is a fool," interrupted the old man, shortly.

"He is telling some pretty plain truths, and Ballard is getting ugly. If I were the young man I would look out. Ballard has more ways than one of getting even."

"What do you mean, Norberg?" John Ganton looked sharply at the stolid face of the man before him.

The Work of Thugs

"I don't know anything, of course, but I've heard 'em talking, and the gang is down on young Borlan. He is n't a bad fellow. I would n't like to see him come to harm. Could n't you give him a friendly hint, Mr. Ganton, to keep his mouth shut for a time?"

Even Norberg rather liked Allan Borlan for his fearlessness in exposing the way in which the men were betrayed by their leaders, and no one knew better than he the truth of every charge made.

"It's no use, Norberg. I have talked with him, but he's as stubborn as a mule. He won't join us in anything. They must paddle their own canoe, but—" and here the old man's voice became sharply peremptory, "I don't want him to come to any harm,—do you hear? Tell those fellows they may talk as much as they please and fight Borlan Bros. all they want to, but if they hurt the young man there'll be trouble."

When Norberg warned Ballard not to go too far with Allan Borlan, the latter's face assumed an ugly look. "Then tell him to keep his mouth shut," was the only response.

Contrary to his usual indifference toward what did not concern himself or his business, John Ganton could not get out of his mind what Norberg had said, and it troubled him so much that at length he told Browning to send for young Borlan. The next moment he was irritated with himself for doing so.

When Allan Borlan entered the small office, the keen eye of John Ganton could see in the young man's careworn face the effects of the strain he was under; the burden of the strike had fallen on his shoulders. "You got us into it, you must fight it out," George Borlan had said at the outset.

Ganton & Co.

"Sit down, Allan, sit down," the old man said in a friendly tone. "I sent for you to warn you against going too far in talking about the rascals who are running this strike; they are a bad lot."

"I am not afraid of them, Mr. Ganton, and they know it," was the firm response.

"All the more danger. They don't fight in the open, and they'd just as soon hit a man from behind as not."

"I can take care of myself. At the same time I thank you for your interest." There was a pause. Allan Borlan was on the point of saying something. He hesitated, but at length he looked up and said slowly:

"I had not intended coming here again, Mr. Ganton, but you sent for me, and now that I am here I can't help telling you what I think." The old man's lips were pressed tightly together and the friendly look went out of his countenance. "You and the other packers control the men who are running this strike, and you have them under pay. You struck our plant first because I refused to join with you and put up money, and you are willing there should be a shut-down now because you have big stocks on hand. This is an employers' strike, not a labor strike, and the poor devils who are out of work and wages are being played by both sides. Now, who are responsible for the disturbances, the disorder, the riots, the assaults? Are the three loafers who are running the labor end responsible or the employers who control them? Are —"

"Look here, young man, if you mean to insinuate that I — that I —" the old man's face was purple with rage and he could scarcely speak, "you may go to — hell for all I care. Get out of here now — clear out!"

The Work of Thugs

Without another word Allan Borlan left the small office. As he disappeared through the door, John Ganton swung around in his chair with a vicious twist and looked out on the street below, his features working, muttering to himself. Yet a look of indecision crept into his features, for he could not rid himself entirely of the feeling that Allan Borlan was right; where did the responsibility rest?

When Norberg came in about five o'clock John Ganton once more, and this time more emphatically, told him to warn the leaders against violence. "I won't have it," he almost shouted; "if they don't call off their thugs I'll land them in prison, every mother's son of them."

Night and day Allan Borlan had worked with feverish energy to keep his plant going. As fast as the employees of one department after another quit work he got in new hands to take their places. These he housed and fed in the Yards, but they were so inexperienced that the work went on under difficulties. With indefatigable energy he was here and there in every building, in every room from the killing to the shipping, directing, showing, often doing the work with his own hands. When the rioting was fiercest he mounted a wagon, and without the slightest hesitation drove into and through the mobs outside the gates, against the earnest protestations of the police, choosing the streets where the danger was greatest. Strangely enough, instead of being stoned, he was cheered by the strikers themselves, and when some young toughs started to throw stones, they were so roughly treated by some of the striking teamsters that thereafter when the young man appeared on one of the wagons he was allowed to pass without hindrance.

Ganton & Co.

The men liked Allan Borlan,— the harder he fought them the better they liked him, all except the leaders he denounced. These scoundrels hated him just because he was so popular among the men, because the men trusted him, and in their hearts felt he was telling the truth about the situation. The more intelligent among the rank and file began to talk among themselves, and ask what the strike was about anyway, and who would be benefited in the end, wondering where all the money was going that was being contributed each week by other unions. Some said this amounted to ten thousand dollars a week, and some said one hundred thousand dollars, but whether ten thousand or a hundred thousand made little difference,— the men got little of it.

Two or three relief stores had been opened near the Yards early in the strike, but the supply of food and necessities quickly gave out, and the families, the women and children who most needed help, never seemed to get anything. There were mutterings and discontent; only the threats of the leaders and business agents kept the good men in line, the loafers who did the rioting and backed up the professional toughs and sluggers who did the fighting, all these were well taken care of from some mysterious source. They had plenty of money, as every saloon-keeper in the vicinity could testify.

No one did so much to spread distrust and discontent among the men as Allan Borlan. He lost no opportunity to speak to them. He invited conferences, and again and again laid bare the inner workings of the strike. He did not mince matters, but named the leaders who had sold out their unions; his bitterest denunciations being directed against Ballard, who received from his spies exaggerated reports of what was said.

The Work of Thugs

So great an impression did Allan Borlan make that at length some of his old men, men with families dependent upon them, one by one appeared at the office, tore up their union cards, and asked to be taken back. Among the first was old Mike.

"I told you, and the rest of the boys, Mike, that if you went out you were out for good," said Allan Borlan to the old man who stood before him, twisting his old battered hat in his hands, a pathetic figure, looking more poverty-stricken than ever; "but if any of you want to come back as individuals, not as members of a union, you can come."

"I have to find work, Mr. Borlan. There are too many of us to live on what the union gives."

"Get your team and I will make the first trip with you, to see you safe down town."

"There's no need of that, sorr, I can go alone." The old man was no coward.

"I'm afraid not, Mike. They will be down on you."

There were no cheers for Allan Borlan as he rode down beside Mike. He noted the scowling faces and ominous signs, and when they returned he asked for an escort of police for the old man.

Another trip to the city was made in safety, but that night when Mike boarded a car just outside the gates to go home two men got on the platform. When he stepped down in front of the little old frame house, hardly more than a shanty, where he lived, one of the men came up behind him, the other in front. The one in front said, "You damned scab, take that!" and dealt the old man a stunning blow in the face. Before he could defend himself the thug behind grabbed him about the body, pinning his arms to his sides,

Ganton & Co.

holding him defenceless against the ugly blows that were rained upon his bleeding face by the first assailant. Covered with blood, he was left lying unconscious in the road, where his old wife and daughter found him, and with the aid of the neighbors carried him into the house. In spite of all they could do, he remained unconscious through the night, and when the doctor came he said the old man's skull had been fractured by something heavier than a man's bare fist. Before the ambulance arrived the old man was delirious. With a strong brogue he talked of his boyhood, of his home in Ireland, of the days when he courted his wife. His mutterings gradually became incoherent, until he knew no one about him, not even the little grandchildren who stood half frightened, half curious by the rickety old couch. Now and then he said something about the strike, but his voice fell so low they could not understand.

Before he could be moved to the County Hospital for an operation, the old man died,—the first victim of the strike.

When Allan Borlan heard of the cowardly murder his face assumed a look of grim determination. Mounting one of the wagons, he drove straight into the crowd of strikers assembled without the gates. The news of Mike's death had spread with that mysterious rapidity which characterizes the dissemination of bad news, until every one in the neighborhood of the Yards, even the most ignorant foreigners, knew all about it. There was some exultation on the part of the ugly and vicious, but for the most part the strikers themselves were depressed and silent; Mike had been a well-known figure in and about the Yards for a generation, and the men liked him, besides they knew how sorely he needed the work. Therefore, when the wagon on which Allan Borlan

The Work of Thugs

was standing stopped in their midst and he began speaking with all the energy and all the bitterness he possessed, they were cowed and listened without a murmur. Even Ballard, who was lounging in the doorway of a saloon with his hands in his pockets, made no attempt to stay the torrent of denunciation which was poured out upon the unions and their methods.

“Too cowardly to fight man to man in the open, you employ thugs and murderers to do your work. Like a pack of whipped curs, you cower before me. Alone and unarmed I am in your midst, and not one of you dares lift his hand against me. But at night, in the darkness of alleys, in the shadows of buildings, by twos and threes, you and your paid thugs lie in wait for an unsuspecting and defenceless victim. If an old man, or a boy, or a woman, your courage rises to the striking point, and you beat and maim and kill, all in the name of your unions; for all that is foul and cowardly Chicago has become a byword in the mouth of peace-loving people. No city on the face of the earth has been so disgraced, so humiliated, so injured in reputation and prosperity by unionism, as Chicago. It is shunned by decent people as a resort for outlaws and criminals.

“I once thought there was some good in labor unions, that some good might grow out of them, and I stood for them, and even encouraged their organization. Now I know I was wrong; now I know they are rotten and corrupt to the core, that they are organized and controlled to suit the selfish ends of the unscrupulous demagogues who run them, and that you, the rank and file, have nothing to say; you are terrorized into blind obedience to orders. You strike when you are told to strike, and you work when you are told to

Ganton & Co.

work, without daring to question or protest. You are bought and sold, and you know it. The men who manage your unions get rich and live in luxury. Where do they get the money? Out of your earnings and out of the employers they blackmail by threats of ruin. Show me a labor leader who is not living in luxury, who is not openly or secretly laying up more money than he could ever earn at any honest calling! From the bottom of my soul I pity you, robbed of your earnings, of your employment, driven about like cattle, bought and sold like so many sheep, deceived and cheated in your ignorance by unscrupulous leaders, you stand here to-day conscious that the blood of an old man, a man you liked and who liked you, is on your heads. That he was killed at the command of your leaders, that he was murdered by your paid tools, and —” pausing a second with uplifted arm pointing directly at Ballard, “there, there in that doorway, with his hands in his pockets, as smiling as a fiend from hell, is the man who prompted the murder.”

Every eye in the crowd was turned upon Ballard. Surprised by the suddenness of the attack, he started, withdrew his hands from his pockets, and turned a sickly yellow. He attempted to smile, but fear and rage distorted his features. Losing the self-control that so seldom deserted him, he shook his fist toward Allan Borlan, muttered something beneath his breath, turned quickly, and disappeared within the saloon.

The tension was so great that an audible sigh of relief went up as the door closed behind Ballard. As Allan Borlan went back into the Yards more than one man whispered to his neighbor, “I should n’t like to be in that young fellow’s shoes, Ballard’s a bad one when he gets started.”

The Work of Thugs

"What do you think he 'll do?" asked one man.

"Who can tell? But if I were Borlan I'd keep my eye peeled going home."

"And steer clear of alleys," was the significant rejoinder.

For a day or two there was a lull in hostilities. All of Borlan's men were sorry for the death of old Mike, and many of the strikers contributed to the fund raised for his widow and daughter. A committee even waited upon Allan Borlan, and in rough terms expressed their regret the old man had been killed, presenting at the same time a resolution which some cleverer hand had drawn, to the effect that "union labor condemns lawlessness as contrary to its fundamental principles," and so on.

Allan Borlan listened to what the spokesman of the committee, one of his own teamsters, had to say. He read the resolution, and the curl of his lips showed the contempt he felt.

"I believe you are sincere, boys, in your regret for the death of Mike. There is not one of you he has not helped out in some way; there was n't a better teamster or a more loyal friend in the Yards. He did not want to quit, but he stood by you and obeyed orders until his family was starving. When he found that the money contributed for the support of the strikers did not reach them, that he could not pay rent or get food enough to keep him alive, he had to come back to work, and the union turned its paid assassins upon him and killed him in cold blood. Now, you pass this lying resolution; you did not draw it, you did not even adopt it, but some one more cunning has put it in your hands to deliver to the public. Every man of you knows as well as I do that it is false. Take your lying resolution back to the

Ganton & Co.

man who drew it — I can guess his name — and tell him from me he is a murderer in his heart, and the blood of Mike is on his cowardly head.”

The men were so abashed by the words and manner of the young man, that without attempting any reply they silently filed out.

George Borlan had listened from an inner office, and when the men were gone he said:

“What’s the use of talking to them that way, Allan? It can do no good, and it only makes bad matters worse.”

“I can’t help it. It’s all true, every word.”

“That may be, but what’s the use stirring up so much ill-feeling? We’ll have to make some deal with them in the end.”

“Never. I will quit the business before I will have anything to do with these unions,” was the emphatic response.

George Borlan shrugged his shoulders, and retired into his own office, but on the way home that night he urged:

“You had better be careful about going out evenings. Those fellows have it in for you, and they won’t stop at anything.”

“They are a lot of cowards.”

“That may be,” said the elder brother earnestly, “and therefore all the more dangerous. They may waylay you anywhere.”

“I can take care of myself,” was the curt response.

“Do you carry a pistol?”

“No; that is a sign of cowardice. When I carry a pistol I will join the police force.” Allan Borlan had profound contempt for men who carried weapons. In his mind it was a confession of fear and lack of confidence not only in one’s

The Work of Thugs

self, but in the community generally. "It reduces us all to the level of border ruffians," he remarked.

"Well, I can't see much difference between Chicago with a strike on and a lawless mining camp. Life is certainly no safer," answered his brother.

"If I lived in a mining camp I would find some way of protecting myself besides carrying a bowie-knife and a six-shooter, like a drunken tough."

With reckless indifference, Allan Borlan sought excuses for going out evenings. He attended meetings down town, held conferences at their city offices, made speeches, published interviews, and in every possible way made himself obnoxious to the unions. Notwithstanding his youth and inexperience, he was the head and front of the fight against the unions. The other packers contented themselves with a show of opposition; they were so little aggressive, that the public suspected they were only too well satisfied with the situation. The price of meat was steadily advancing.

Nearly a week had elapsed since the death of old Mike. There had been no additional fatalities, though many non-union men had been viciously assaulted, and a few union sluggers had been arrested. These had been either discharged or let off under suspended sentences by complaisant political magistrates. So far not a rioter had been fined or committed to jail, the extent of their inconvenience being measured by a night in the station-house. This lax administration of justice was attracting attention and threatened to develop into a scandal.

It was Saturday night. Allan Borlan left the Yards later than usual to hasten home for dinner, to attend afterward an important conference at their city offices. It was nearly

Ganton & Co.

midnight when he and his brother started for home; they took an Indiana Avenue car, which carried each within a block of his home; Allan Borlan got out at Twenty-first Street to go over to Prairie Avenue, where he lived with his mother, while George rode some blocks farther south.

The two had discussed long and earnestly the business of the evening, and when Allan left the car his mind was so preoccupied with the various considerations urged by his brother that he walked east on Twenty-first Street with less than his usual caution. He never thought to keep well to the outer edge of the walk, as had been his custom of late, but walked slowly along, his hands in his pockets and his eyes on the walk, thinking. The street was dimly lighted; he had just passed the corner of the alley extending south between two stables, when he heard footsteps behind him. Turning quickly, he caught a glimpse of the face of a man who darted out of the shadow of the building, and before he could defend himself, struck him a blow on the head with some heavy weapon. With a groan that was little more than a deep sigh, the young man sank to the ground in a heap. Stopping but a second to look at his victim, the assailant fled south through the alley.

About three in the morning the policeman who covered that beat found Allan Borlan, called the patrol, and had him taken to St. Luke's Hospital. He was not dead, but for three days, in spite of every effort to arouse him, he remained in a comatose condition. The surgeons were at a loss to account for this prolonged lethargy. The skull was not fractured, though he had evidently been dealt a heavy blow with a sand-bag. Quite likely a clot of blood had formed, but his stupor was so complete it was impossible to form an opinion



Allan walked slowly along the dimly lighted street, his hands in his pockets and his eyes on the sidewalk, thinking.

The Work of Thugs

as to the location of the clot and attempt its removal. There was nothing to do but encourage by every means known to science some signs of returning consciousness.

When Allan's paralyzed brain did begin to recover its dormant powers, it was observed he was flighty and forgetful, manifesting only a vague interest in what was going on about him. He expressed no surprise on finding himself in the hospital, nor did he so much as inquire how he came there; as his condition improved, they asked him about the circumstances attending the assault, to see if it was not possible to identify his assailant, but he could recall nothing that had happened that evening. He did not remember that he had attended any meeting in the city, or that he had taken the car with his brother. He had a confused recollection of a strike,—“somewhere,” as he put it,—and knit his brows and tried to think. “But I don't know just where, it must have been a long time ago,” he said slowly, the image of the reality flitting so elusively before his disordered memory that it seemed remote and unsubstantial.

When his brothers came to see him he made no attempt to talk about business. His interest in the affairs of Borlan Bros. had so completely evaporated that for him the firm no longer existed.

To his mother he turned for rest and consolation, like a little child; he kissed her again and again, as he had when a boy playing by her side, and he held her hand by the hour, as she sat by the bed struggling bravely but often ineffectually to keep back the tears that filled her eyes. Specialists were called, and after exhaustive examinations and tests, they shook their heads, baffled.

“No positive sign of physical injury, either external or

Ganton & Co.

internal, appears," they said. "An operation at present would be probing in the dark. There is nothing to do but wait. He may recover his intellectual powers any day, then again —" They hesitated to pronounce the dread alternative of a life of comparative imbecility, but that was what they meant, and every one knew it.

When able to move about, he was the shadow of his former self, the wreck of a man physically and mentally. He walked slowly, hesitatingly, as if uncertain of himself, bending forward to make sure of his steps, and leaning heavily upon a cane. He loved the sunshine, and sat for hours in the small yard back of their house, merely vegetating, barely taking note of what went on about him, but responding with a sweet smile and some vague remark whenever any one addressed him.

CHAPTER XV

END OF THE STRIKE

THERE was great consternation at the Yards when it was reported Allan Borlan had been assaulted and could not live. Throughout the city the news spread and aroused such a feeling of resentment and indignation, such a storm of protest and denunciation against the city authorities, the police, and the unions, that the leaders were cowed and sought peace. Most of the strikers realized that matters had gone too far, and even the yellow journals, which find capital in fomenting discontent and disorder, were obliged to come out for the moment on the side of law and order, and condemn brutalities, not as criminal, but "as injurious to the great cause of union labor." At the same time, however, urging apologetically that "there is no evidence the assault upon Mr. Borlan had any connection with the strike. It might have been one of the many hold-ups for which Chicago is gaining such an unenviable notoriety, and for which the present city administration is directly responsible," at once seeking to relieve unionism and turn the crime to political account.

Utterances like these deceived no one; everybody knew Allan Borlan was the victim of the cowardly vengeance of the men he had denounced. He had no other enemies, and the fact that his money and watch were found upon him proved conclusively he was not the victim of an ordinary city highwayman.

Ganton & Co.

In the vicinity of the Yards there was only one opinion concerning the identity of the man responsible for the assault: if Ballard did not do it himself,— and those who knew him well felt sure he did,— he had ordered it done. This was the conviction of most of the men, and they did not hesitate to express this conviction covertly among themselves; but keen detectives employed by Borlan Bros. could not discover sufficient evidence to connect him with the crime. All they could learn was that he had attended a committee meeting down town on the night in question, leaving about eleven o'clock to go to his rooms in Wabash Avenue. In the apartment building where he lived no one knew what hour he had entered, but a woman on the floor below thought she heard him walking about long after midnight; that was all, not enough to justify his arrest. Meanwhile Ballard was not so much in evidence about the Yards. His face had lost none of the cold, cynical, at times ugly expression which made him feared by his most intimate associates, but he thought it wise to stick close to headquarters until the storm of indignation blew over.

On the Monday afternoon following the assault, Norberg and he met in the room above the saloon on Clark Street, in response to Norberg's urgent telephone message.

The secret agent of Ganton & Co. was covered with perspiration, nervous, and excited as he hurriedly entered the dingy room where Ballard was already seated coolly smoking a fine cigar.

Carefully locking the door behind him, Norberg exclaimed excitedly:

"I say, Ballard, this thing has gone too far."

"What has gone too far?" was the nonchalant response.

End of the Strike

"This — this — you know what I mean. The jig's up; the old man is terribly worked up over this slugging of young Borlan, and he threatens to help land some one in Joliet."

"You can tell the old man to go to hell!" This time Ballard's eyes flashed, and he struck his fist heavily on the beer-stained wooden table. "If he goes to making trouble, things may come out he would not like."

Norberg knew what the threat meant, and furthermore he knew, if pushed to the wall, Ballard was desperate enough to make his threats good regardless of consequences, so he said more soothingly:

"All the same, Ballard, you must call the strike off."

"That's easier said than done. Why should we send the men back to work?"

"The public is getting worked up — the slugging of Borlan —"

"Then lower the price of meat," interrupted Ballard with a sneer, "and the public will forget all about that little affair."

Paying no attention to the other's tone, Norberg continued hurriedly: "We can arrange for a conference to-morrow morning, and there can be a show of give and take on both sides, with talk of leaving all differences to arbitration. That will give you a chance to order the men back."

"That's all very fine, Norberg, but it won't work without a little lubrication. Let me see," Ballard thought a moment, tapping his fingers on the table as if counting, "it will take just about ten thousand dollars to call this strike off."

"Ten thousand nothing!" shouted Norberg hotly. "You fellows have been well paid, and you are lucky to get out with any sort of recognition, for I can tell you, Ballard, some of

Ganton & Co.

the packers are in favor of seizing this opportunity to shut the unions out of the Yards entirely."

"Let them try it," interrupted Ballard, and his face assumed the look that all his associates feared.

"Anyway, there's no use asking for more money."

"Ten thousand dollars, or let them take the consequences," Ballard repeated laconically. Norberg knew it was useless to argue with the man. The matter would have to be fought out, or the money paid.

A day or two later the papers contained announcements that a conference had been arranged, and that there was a prospect of adjusting differences. The mayor, the committee of aldermen, the Ruskin Settlement, the independent clergy, and the indefatigable secretary of the National Civic Association came out in carefully prepared interviews, claiming the credit of having brought the contending parties together.

At the meeting there was talk of conciliation and arbitration and concessions. The result was that the men, or rather all for whom there was work, were ordered back with no advance in wages or change in conditions of employment, but with the vague promise something would or might be done for them in the near or distant future. The net result to the men was a loss of so many weeks' wages, and the loss of positions for a large number, for it was tacitly understood that the companies would take this opportunity to weed out a lot of old and worn-out employees. The unions made loud complaints that the men were not all taken back, but these complaints were not intended to carry weight save here and there where a local leader or agitator had been inadvertently dropped; for the old men with families who were

End of the Strike

not taken back, the unions had no solicitude beyond a general protest which amounted to nothing.

The public was disappointed because the price of meat did not drop immediately upon the ending of the strike, but the packers explained at length that the plants were in a condition of great disorder, the business disorganized, stocks on hand greatly reduced, so it was impossible to reduce prices; also, somewhat inconsistently, that prices were kept up by the retail dealers rather than the wholesale. To the surprise of the public, all these explanations, consistent and otherwise, were affirmed as reasonable by the strikers, by the very men who but a few days before had been accusing the packers of all sorts of unlawful practices to keep prices up. The Yards were once more united against city, State, and nation, against everybody and everything outside the gates.

No one could estimate the profits Ganton & Co. made, directly and indirectly, out of the strike. It was easy to figure the saving in wages and running expenses, and the advance in the prices of nearly all food products, but John Ganton had taken every advantage of the market. Before the strike was rumored he had gone short of ribs, pork, corn, and wheat on the Chicago Board of Trade, and of a large line of stocks on the New York Exchange; during the progress of the strike he had used all the resources at his command to depress the market, and before there was so much as a suggestion of a settlement he covered his short lines at a huge profit.

"I'll bet the old rascal has made over a million out of the strike," Range Salter remarked enviously.

As a matter of fact, that figure was considerably below the truth.

Ganton & Co.

Notwithstanding the successful outcome of all his plans, John Ganton was restless and irritable; he worried over the condition of Allan Borlan, and every one in the office knew it.

"How is he getting on?" was the question he asked Browning every morning.

"Just the same," was the invariable response; whereupon the old man shuffled about uneasily, and paid no attention to the telegrams and letters on his desk for some time. During the day it was not uncommon for Browning to find him gazing out of the window in an absent-minded fashion, so unlike his accustomed manner that at length Browning ventured the inquiry:

"Are n't you feeling well, Mr. Ganton?"

With a start the old man wheeled around in his chair.

"I don't know, Browning. I ain't quite up to the mark; my stomick's out of sorts lately, but I guess I'll be all right in a day or two."

"Why don't you see a doctor?"

"Doctors are all fools; a good dose of castor oil is all I need. Why don't the doctors help young Borlan?" he suddenly asked. "If they know so much, why don't they help him?"

"His is a very strange case; some injury to the brain."

"Well, why don't they cure him? — the idiots!" The tone was so sharp, and at the same time plaintive, that Browning looked up surprised. "Why don't they cure him?" The question was monotonously repeated, then suddenly, "Browning, I would give ten thousand dollars to see that young fellow all right again."

"They are doing everything they can, Mr. Ganton."

End of the Strike

"I suppose so, I suppose so; but the doctors are all fools. They will kill him yet, then that will be their fault, won't it?"

"It's not so bad as that. They say he may come to himself any day. He is sound in every way but his brain."

"Well, is n't that enough?" the old man snarled. "Keep posted, Browning, and let me know soon 's he's better."

There was no doubt about it, John Ganton had changed since the strike. He was not himself. Others remarked it besides Browning. He was irritable,—which was nothing new, for the old man had a violent temper,—but his irritability assumed a new phase; he had become nervously and fretfully irritable, as if laboring under a heavy weight of anxiety, or suffering from some unrecognized ailment. At home his wife noticed he did not eat so heartily as was his habit, and his appetite was freaky. At one meal he was ravenously hungry, at the next he might turn suddenly from the table, exclaiming, "I can't eat anything, Maria."

In response to her anxious inquiries he only said, "I guess my stomick's out of kilter."

He took huge doses of castor oil, which would cramp him double with pain, but afterward he always felt relieved and could eat with more relish. Nothing would induce him to see a doctor. "They are all fools," was his stereotyped reply to the suggestion. "They would just run up big bills and kill me in the end. When I go to a doctor I will make a bargain with the undertaker first."

The trouble was not altogether physical. John Ganton's mind was not at ease. Down deep within his heart he felt he was in a way to blame for Allan Borlan's condition. Had he not refused to help the young man, to stand by him, to fight the strike openly? Did he not even go so far as

Ganton & Co.

to encourage the strike of Borlan Bros.' men in advance? That was what troubled him, and made him so anxious about the young man's condition.

Another matter was the report that Will was to marry May Keating. This news came like a bolt out of a clear sky. Just after a meeting of the directors of the bank Range Salter turned to him and said, "Well, Ganton, I hear Will is engaged to the Keating girl; I thought you were down on the old man."

John Ganton was staggered, and could only look at Salter in dumb amazement; it was the first intimation he had received that Will had not obeyed his injunction to have nothing to do with the Keating girls. Without a word he hurriedly left the bank and returned to his office; calling for Browning he said to him:

"Look here, Browning, your wife keeps track of what's going on in the fool world better than we do. I want you to tell me plain, have you heard anything about Will and this Keating girl being engaged?"

The question took Browning by surprise. He had heard a good deal, and he more than suspected that what he heard was true, but he had not intended saying anything about the matter to John Ganton. It could only make trouble; he knew how bitterly the old man disliked Keating, and he dreaded the consequences of Will's infatuation.

Browning's confusion answered the inquiry more plainly than words.

"I want the truth, Browning," the old man repeated sharply.

"I really don't know anything in particular, Mr. Ganton," Browning stammered.

End of the Strike

"But you have heard something. I want to know what you have heard."

"I have heard that Will is very attentive —"

"Have you heard they are engaged to be married? — that's what I want to know!" the old man shouted, his face red with anger.

"People say they are engaged, but," Browning hastened to add deprecatingly, "you can't rely upon what people say."

"It is enough that he has given them reason to say so,— that a son of mine should be even reported engaged to a daughter of Jem Keating. If he marries her I'll not leave him a cent, Browning,—not a red cent!"

"They probably won't marry," Browning urged soothingly. "It does not follow nowadays because young people are engaged they are sure to marry,—it's different from what it was when we were young." Browning tried to speak lightly, but the attempt was a failure. The old man was too absorbed in his passion to notice what was said, and only repeated, half to himself, "I'll cut him off without a penny." He clenched the big hairy fist that rested on the desk, and Browning knew it would be worse than useless to try to shake his determination.

During the strike Will had worked like a tiger, going to the Yards early and remaining late, often sleeping on the old leather-covered couch in his office. The unusual excitement appealed to him and aroused his sluggish energies. To the surprise of many of the foremen, he made himself useful in more than one department; he stoked in the hot boiler-rooms or drove teams as the mood seized him, his strength and endurance commanding the respect of the brawniest men alongside. The manual labor and outdoor

Ganton & Co.

life, the excitement and danger, he liked better than the office work. As he stood one afternoon all grimy and sweaty at the door of the boiler-room, he said to Browning, who had just driven up:

"By Jove, I believe I would make a first-class hand about the plant, but I'm no good in the office. It makes me sleepy to sit at a desk all day."

Browning looked at the stocky, powerful figure before him and in his own mind agreed it was a mistake to try to make an office man out of Will Ganton; he was not cut out for the counting-room.

At that moment one of the negro teamsters who had been employed to take the place of the strikers drove up, and throwing down his reins said:

"Dere 's no use, boss, I 'se ready to quit."

"What 's the matter now?" Will asked sharply.

"De crowd 's too big for me. Dey 'll stone me to def soon 's I git outside de gates; I 'se ready to quit."

"Get back on that seat, you black coward. I 'll see you through." Will jumped up on the seat beside the man, who was more afraid to disobey than to face the crowd of strikers and strike sympathizers outside.

"You better be careful, Will," Browning shouted warningly as they drove off, but the young man apparently did not hear. At the big gate a policeman stopped them and said:

"There 's an ugly crowd outside. Better let me call the wagon if you intend to drive through."

"Never you mind, officer, I 'll put the wagon through without an escort. Open the gates."

The officer drew back, shaking his head doubtfully. He

End of the Strike

knew the temper of the mob outside, for he had been on duty since early in the morning, and he knew mighty little would be required to precipitate a riot. The bringing in of negroes to take the places of the strikers had infuriated the men. Not a wagon had left the yard with a negro driver without a police escort, and in several instances drivers and officers had been indiscriminately stoned. Toward noon there had been a lull; no wagons went out, and the extra details of police had returned to the stations.

As the great gates swung open and the wagon passed through, the horses on a gallop, the crowd outside gave way. There was a murmur of astonishment when the mob saw only a single wagon with two men on the seat, and no patrol wagon following. The audacity of the attempt so dazed the strikers that for some distance no effort was made to block the road, but about midway of the second block a huge truck stood across the narrow street, left there as an obstacle in the way of any team that might come from the Yards. On the sidewalk groups of thugs and men reckless from drink were gathered to take advantage of the blockade.

When Will Ganton, the cowering negro at his side, came to a sudden stand by the truck, a hoarse growl went up from the crowd, and there were ugly threats and calls to the young man to get down and leave the "nigger" to his fate. A stone was thrown, followed by several, then a fusillade, all aimed at the negro crouched behind the seat in mortal terror.

A sharp piece of rock hit Will on the forehead, bringing the blood and rousing in him the fury of a wild animal. Seizing one of the iron-shod stakes of the wagon, he leaped from the seat and dashed into the thickest of the mob. In his blind rage his strength was doubled. At the first sweep

Ganton & Co.

of the ugly weapon he crushed the arm of the nearest man; pressing forward, he swung the merciless stake to the right and left indiscriminately upon the rioters. They fell back before his terrific onslaught, turned, and ran, leaving four of their number bruised and senseless on the pavement.

By the time the officer at the gate came running up, the trouble was over, the rioters dispersed. Will Ganton's fury evaporated somewhat as he looked at the bruised and bleeding fellows he had struck down. Leaving the police to ascertain the extent of their injuries and look after them, he quickly swung the pole of the truck that blocked the street to one side so as to open up a passageway, resumed his seat, and ordered the negro to drive on.

When May Keating read in the morning papers highly sensational, but not greatly exaggerated, accounts of the "daring of Will Ganton in dashing into a crowd of rioters and dispersing them single-handed, disabling four and nearly killing one," her cheeks flushed with excitement, and she said to her sister:

"I could almost love that sort of a man."

"Well, for my part," exclaimed Mrs. Jack, "I can't see why he should risk his life among those strikers,—and for a negro, at that!" Her tone exhibited her profound disgust.

"If for a negro, so much the better; to risk one's life in any cause is more than most men are capable of doing."

"I suppose now he has broken a few heads you will marry him," responded Mrs. Jack, hopefully.

"I don't know,—perhaps; since this strike he has been a different fellow."

"I should say he had,—so dirty and oily and greasy it takes one's appetite away to see him at the table."

End of the Strike

May Keating laughed. The few times Will Ganton had dined with them at the Club since the beginning of the strike he certainly had been far from agreeably clean; in spite of the vigorous use of hot water and the strongest of soft soaps, his hands and finger nails showed the grimy effects of his new occupations. For the time being he was a laboring man, looked like one, acted like one, ate like one.

"Old John Ganton over again," Larry Delaney murmured as he watched him one evening across the table; "he does look like his father, does n't he?"

"I never noticed it so much before," responded Mrs. Jack.

"He has the body, but not the head," was Delaney's shrewd observation.

When McCarthy telephoned down how Will had dispersed the strikers without police assistance, John Ganton was immensely pleased.

"The boy has the right stuff in him, after all," he said to Browning. "How many did McCarthy say were hurt?"

"The patrol wagon took four to the County Hospital. One had his shoulder crushed, and another his arm broken. It's a wonder they were not killed."

"Would have served them right if they had been, the cowardly rascals," The old man's eyes blazed, and he added, in another tone: "But the boy must not take such chances,—no need of it. Let the niggers look out for themselves. Their heads are harder to crack."

Under these conditions John Ganton could not bring himself to speak to Will about his rumored engagement to May Keating. His mind was so taken up with the events of the hour, especially by the assault upon young Borlan and the settlement of the strike, that the report which at the time

Ganton & Co.

had aroused his ire was almost forgotten; when he did think of it he dismissed the matter as beyond the range of possibilities, and he persuaded himself it was unnecessary to speak about it again.

This was quite contrary to the habit of John Ganton. He seldom refrained from speaking without restraint concerning anything that crossed his wishes, but his aversion to Jem Keating was so deep-seated he did not like to talk of the man. The thought that any son of his could marry a daughter of the "old reprobate," as he called Keating, seemed ridiculous. Of course Will could not help meeting a lot of people at the clubs, the Keating girls as well as others, good, bad, and indifferent, but further than seeing them in that way there could be nothing serious.

Beyond lunching hurriedly once or twice a week at the Club, and dining occasionally with business associates, the old man knew nothing of social life; ordinarily he slipped in by the back entrance of the Grand Pacific and bolted a luncheon of steak, baked potatoes, and coffee,—the waiter knew his order. Not infrequently he had a cup of coffee and a sandwich sent to his office from the lunch-counter in the building. On days of great excitement in the market he went without anything to eat until dinner time, but this he did not believe in for himself or others. He had often gone so far as to threaten to discharge men whose dinner-pails came scantily supplied. "I've no use for a starved horse or a hungry man."

He cared nothing for politics, he read only the papers, for years he had not gone to the theatre, he could not remember when he had been inside a church. Now and then he attended a bankers' or a merchants' dinner, invari-

End of the Strike

ably sitting at a table with business associates so he might talk over the affairs of the day. His name figured on prominent committees on great public occasions, but he never attended meetings or wasted a moment's time, whether the guest were the Governor of the State or the President.

Outside the Yards and the companies in which he was interested the world was a passing show to John Ganton, and one so vain and inconsequential from his point of view that it did not divert him in the slightest degree.

Aside from the money he had made, which he accepted as a matter of course, the one encouraging feature of the strike was the behavior of Will. The unexpected energy with which the boy worked, the brute force he displayed, his dare-devil courage, all pleased the old man; again and again he said to Browning: "He's all right. The boy's got the right stuff in him," and he rubbed his big hairy hands together in satisfaction.

About a week after the strike was called off he happened to meet Range Salter on the street near the Board of Trade, and the thought suddenly occurred to him it was Salter who had spoken about Will's engagement.

"Look here, Salter," he said, stopping the other, "you said something about Will's going to marry that Keating girl. I want to tell you there's nothing in it; there's nothing in it," he repeated sharply.

"Well, it's the talk of the town, that's all I know about it," Salter answered impatiently.

"You can just say for me there's nothing in it. Do you hear? There's nothing in it," and John Ganton moved off toward the entrance of the building.

When Range Salter wrote Mrs. Salter about this conver-

Ganton & Co.

sation, a smile of satisfaction spread over that little lady's round face. "I thought as much," she said to herself, "now there will be some chance for others."

In accordance with her promise, Mrs. Ganton called upon Mrs. Jack and her sister. It was an eventful day for the timid little soul in black, the first time in all her life that she had done anything which she knew was contrary to her husband's wishes, the first time she had ever done anything she felt obliged to conceal from him, and as she drove over to the North Side her conscience pricked her. Twice she ordered the man to drive back and then on again, until the coachman shrugged his shoulders in disgust at what seemed to him a woman's inability to make up her mind what she wanted to do.

As they approached the Wilton palace she became more and more nervous, wringing her thin white hands in positive distress. Left alone in the grand reception room, her mind was diverted for the time being by the gorgeousness about her. She had never seen anything like it; her own sombre parlor, with its set of upholstered furniture, its big chandelier, and profuse stucco ornaments on the ceiling, had always seemed grand, too grand really to use, but it was barren simplicity compared with the tiling, the marble, the decorations, the paintings, the porcelains, the gilt and glitter of Mrs. Jack's imposing salon. She shrank into a corner quite overcome, and during the entire call,—marked by effusive cordiality on Mrs. Jack's part, and a curious but sympathetic interest on May Keating's,—she did not fully recover from the conviction of her own utter insignificance. She felt so completely out of place, it was with positive relief she heard

End of the Strike

the massive door close behind her as she hastened down the stone steps.

Not a word was said of the engagement, and little about Will; somehow she could not bring herself to speak of what was uppermost in the minds of all of them. Several times Mrs. Jack referred in glowing terms to Will's bravery, his devotion to business, his ability, and the like, but the mother could do no more than murmur an assent to these appreciations. She could not discuss her boy with these strange women; by what right did they talk as if they had an interest in him? The natural, the inevitable resentment of the mother toward the intervention of the other woman filled her heart.

She did not like Mrs. Jack so well as her sister. That she was sure of, though the latter did not make so much of an effort to be agreeable. There was something about Mrs. Jack which did not seem true, something forced and artificial, a striving to produce an effect. "She wants her sister to marry Will. She has set her heart upon it, because she thinks Will will be rich,—just for his money, that is all. No; I do not like her, but May Keating—" and for a long time on the way home she thought of May Keating, of her father and her mother, of her as she was when a child, of the family before Jem Keating had failed and fallen so low.

"Yes, she is more like her mother," she thought. "She has more heart, but the other is like the father. I would not trust her. I wish Will was in love with some one else. What shall I do?" Again she wrung her thin hands in painful indecision over what she should tell her husband, for she felt she must sooner or later tell him what had occurred,—how could she keep it? Now the call was over, now she had

Ganton & Co.

done it, it seemed more difficult than ever to keep from telling all about it that very day; an inward voice kept repeating, "You must tell, you must tell, you cannot help telling," until she almost made up her mind it was the best thing to do. But when John Ganton came home that evening he was so tired and cross she did not dare speak of it.

There was a drawn look in his face she did not like; a look of pain and suffering rather than of care and worry. He ate scarcely any dinner.

"What is the matter, John? Are you sick?"

"No; I'm not sick, but my stomick's all upset,—something I've eaten. I guess a dose of oil will straighten me out."

"Remember how it cramped you the last time you took it. Don't you think you'd better see a doctor?" she suggested timidly.

"Not if I want to keep my feet," he answered irritably. "I can take care of myself yet."

"You look bilious. I've never seen you looking so yellow, John."

"So Browning said. My liver needs stirring up."

"You will be careful what you take, won't you? You take such strong doses I am afraid you will hurt yourself."

He made no answer, but pushing his plate to one side, sat silent, his head dropped forward on his breast, muttering half to himself, "It's my stomick that's out o' kilter."

After dinner he took off his shoes, put on his pair of old slippers, and went into the library to read the evening paper; this was his habit when he had no business on hand.

He dropped into the big easy-chair beside the old-fashioned table, but instead of reading the paper he let

End of the Strike

it fall in his lap, and his appearance indicated that he was absorbed in considerations other than the news of the day.

That vague sense of discomfort in his stomach, accompanied now and then by a sharp pain he did not like, he did not understand. His health had never bothered him, he always ate plain food, so why should he be conscious he had a stomach? The sense of discomfort had increased of late, and the pains had become sharper and more frequent; at first they would just come and go, amounting to nothing, but of late there had been disagreeable sensations present most of the time. When his mind was not occupied with other matters he was conscious of these queer feelings. Such, however, was his iron will, he had been able for the most part to suppress even the feeling of bodily discomfort,—to ignore it as if it did not exist; but since the strike, since the assault upon Allan Borlan, the old man had not been quite the same as before. He was subject to fits of abstraction, and he had become moody and more irascible than ever. Range Salter remarked one day to Browning:

“What is the matter with the old man, he looks sick?”

“I don’t know,” Browning answered slowly; “I am afraid there’s something wrong with his liver, at times he is so yellow. But he won’t see a doctor.”

“He’d better look out at his time of life,” was Salter’s response.

“I have tried to warn him, but he has always been as strong as an ox, and he does not like to have any one tell him he looks sick.”

As John Ganton sat there under the light of the kerosene lamp—he would not have an electric light on his table—he looked so old and careworn and sick his wife was

Ganton & Co.

frightened. She had never seen him quite like that before, but she did not dare say anything.

After a silence that lasted so long it was oppressive, he suddenly observed:

"Maria, they say young Borlan is no better."

"I heard to-day the doctors from New York hold out very little hope. He is as helpless almost as a baby. What an awful thing that strike was!"

"It was n't the fault of the strike," he said sharply.

"Why, they say —"

"It don't matter what they say. No one knows who did it."

"Will says he is sure it was a man by the name of Ballard, one of the strike leaders."

"Well, no one knows,— just as likely a common footpad."

"But he was n't robbed, was he?"

John Ganton made no answer, and apparently did not hear his wife's remark. His mind followed its own train of thought. At length, with something like a groan, he said:

"I would give anything if that young fellow were himself again."

Surprised at his tone and manner, his wife urged soothingly: "Why, John, it can't be helped. It's not your fault. You did all you could to end the strike. Will says Allan Borlan himself did more to bring on the strike than any one else."

"What does Will know about it?" the old man interrupted angrily. "I wish he would stop talking and tend to his own affairs. By the way," he said, changing the subject as if a new thought had occurred to him, "Range Salter said the other day Will is engaged to that Keating girl. If he

End of the Strike

goes fooling around those girls there 'll be trouble,— that 's all I 've got to say."

The old man relapsed into a moody silence, and Mrs. Ganton's heart sank within her. How could she tell her husband she had called that day on those very girls? What good would it do to tell him? He would only storm at Will, and there would be a scene; she would wait until he felt better and was less irritable.

To divert him, she at length asked timidly:

"What do you hear from John?"

Her husband's thoughts were elsewhere, and it was several seconds before he heeded her question.

"John? Oh, he is doing better 'n I expected; Mac-Masters says he 's tending close to business."

This made his mother's heart glad.

"I always knew —"

"He 'll never amount to much," he interrupted roughly; "he has too many fool notions to make a business man. What use would he have been in this strike?"

"I don't know, but —"

"Just no use at all;" the tone of this answer to his own query betrayed the contempt old John Ganton felt for his younger son.

The mother subsided; it was quite useless to argue with her husband, his opinions were fixed, his prejudices adamant.

The thought of one son evidently brought to mind the other, for he said sharply:

"I want you to tell Will what I say. If he goes hanging about those Keating girls there will be trouble. I won't have it, and that 's all there is about it."

Ganton & Co.

He picked the paper from his knees. He glanced at the market reports, and began reading the column headed, "Gossip on Change." It always amused him to read the rumors and gossip of the Street, paragraphs in which the name of Ganton & Co. figured so often and so conspicuously. Half-way down the column he came upon the following:

"There is an ugly rumor afloat to the effect that the recent strike was brought on by several of the large packers who had stocks on hand they wished to dispose of at good prices; if so, it is pretty safe to say Borlan Bros. were not in the conspiracy."

It was just a malicious little paragraph, but the shot went home. John Ganton angrily threw the paper on the floor, and dropped his head upon his hand in an attitude of dejection.

CHAPTER XVI

BLOOD WILL TELL

THIS was the first summer Mrs. Jack had spent in town since her marriage. To go somewhere the last week in June and return during October was a habit with her, not that she found Chicago hot and disagreeable in summer,—quite the contrary,—but it was good form to go somewhere. She had fully expected to go to Norway this summer; but the possibility of marrying her sister to Will Ganton kept her at home. It was too good a chance to let slip.

As for Jack Wilton, he much preferred staying in Chicago.

“Summer’s the pleasantest season of the year, Sally; what’s the use of going away?” he used to say when they were first married. But he soon found his wife’s movements were governed by considerations other than climatic. He liked to play golf, to ride and drive,—in short, to do most of the things Mrs. Jack cared nothing at all about; he did not like to sit around on club verandas and gossip with women — “club harpies” he called them. He lacked the faculty of making himself agreeable, and possibly for that very reason was popular with all the men and looked upon with friendly condescension and sympathy by most of the women of his acquaintance.

August, with its dust and heat, its strikes, riots, and disturbances, had gone. Mrs. Jack fumed and fretted; she did not care anything about the strike; the Yards were so far

Ganton & Co.

away that people on the North Side read each morning about the riots of the day before with the unconcern they felt when reading of disturbances in Russia. So long as the down-town district was not invaded, it did not much matter; but what annoyed Mrs. Jack was that the strike kept Will Ganton so closely confined they saw very little of him. She felt, therefore, as if she were wasting time, as if no progress were being made.

"If we had only known, we might just as well have gone to the seashore for August," she exclaimed impatiently to her sister.

"I am not at all bored; I like Chicago best in the summer, when all the people are away," was the quiet response.

May Keating was content to remain in the city for the very reasons Mrs. Jack wished to get away. She read the news of the Yards with curious interest, and for the first time Will Ganton began to interest her as something more than a good fellow. He became a personality, a force in his way,—possibly a crude, rough, brutal force in his contact with the men about him, but none the less a force; and that is a good deal in a woman's estimation.

She wondered if after all she might not love him, if he might not possess some of the masterful qualities so essential to command a woman's devotion; but every time the thought of love crossed her mind, memories of another summer, of another face, another voice, would flow in upon her with overwhelming force. What was the use?

She had received but one letter from Gertrude Townsend, dated from Paris, and it said in part:

"Not a soul, *chérie*, not a soul; the world is a desert, Paris the most barren spot in the universe. So I am bored to

Blood Will Tell

death, so bored I lack the ambition to move. There is not a man in sight. Think of it! I dined last night in the Bois with Jarvis!— can you imagine it? Poor fellow, I really felt sorry for him; the waiters were so funny, they knew him and did not know me, so they served us as only French waiters can serve a man who is supposed to be dining with another man's wife,— their airs of sympathetic and discreet comprehension were delightful. It was only too plain that Jarvis had dined there often, and not alone.

“He was so uncomfortable he did not know what to do when a boy came up with a fan,— a fiery red creation,— and said in his best English, ‘Pardon, here is ze fan madame haf dropped ze ozzer evening,’ I really pitied him, he was in such a state of confusion. He stammered out something and tried to deny all connection with the fan, but the boy persisted, sure it was madame who had dropped the fan just as she drove away with monsieur. In my sweetest accents I said, ‘Never mind, dear, take the fan, it is such a pretty red it quite goes with your complexion — for the moment.’ You should have seen the poor fellow's face; from the fan I should say ‘madame’ was tall, probably slender, and a pronounced brunette.

“You ask me if you should marry for money. I did, why should not you? If you marry for love you are sure to be miserable; you may be happy if you marry for money,— I am quite contented. You have been in love, and there is nothing left but money.

“By the way, there was a young man from Chicago on the steamer; you may know him, John Ganton, son of the great packer. He quite distinguished himself by exposing the tricks of a gang of professional gamblers who were fleecing Jarvis out of my pin-money. For lack of better material I amused myself by trying to become acquainted with the young ogre, but his stolidity was proof against all my blandishments. He struck me as a singular mixture of sagacity and animal strength, with a highly polished, intellectual

Ganton & Co.

veneer which might be easily scratched,—an instance of the reincarnation of sweaty forefathers in perfumed sons, only that he does not quite answer that description. He is interesting, but hopelessly unresponsive. I tried to make something of him, but he lacked pliability — a bit of as stubborn material as I have run across in the male line for many a year. There was no one else on board worth a dozen words, — a little fat Austrian Ambassador and the gambler. I rather liked the gambler, and might have done something with him if I had not wasted all my energies on your young pork-packer. If he ever returns to Chicago, cultivate him; he is worth while, if only as a — very literally — *pièce de résistance* upon which to whet the edge of your appetite.

“Marry, *chérie*, marry, and be free to do as you please,—then stagnate with ennui because everything worth doing has been done, and done incomparably better ages ago.”

How singular Gertrude Townsend should have met the brother of Will Ganton, the student and dreamer; how much more singular that the young man should occasion that clever woman of the world a second thought,—truly there was something aggressive, something irrepressible, in the blood of old John Ganton!

Mrs. Jack had exhausted all her ingenuity in endeavoring to further the marriage upon which she had set her heart, but since the engagement no progress had been made so far as she could see. Her intimate friends began to inquire, with a solicitude that barely disguised their impertinent curiosity, if any date had been set.

“‘Don’t play a fish too long,’ is a good angler’s motto,” Carrie Trelway called out in her loud clear voice one afternoon on the veranda of the Golf Club.

The three or four women sitting about the round-topped

Blood Will Tell

table smiled at the audacity of the remark, and Mrs. Jack's face turned crimson. But what could she say? What could any one say to Carrie Trelway, who invited an angry retort only that she might cut deeper still?

Will Ganton was dining with them as usual, just as he had dined with them twenty times in the past two months, just as he might dine with them for an indefinite period to come unless something were done to bring matters to an issue.

During the afternoon May and he had taken a long walk, and during the dinner both were preoccupied to such an extent that conversation was maintained with an effort. Mrs. Jack did not know what it meant, but she determined to find out that night. Delaney sat back in his chair and looked from the one to the other quizzically; but to his surprise he received no answering glance from May Keating. Something's up this time, sure, he thought to himself; not a quarrel, but something really serious.

After dinner he ventured to ask in a friendly way:

"What's the matter now, May?"

"Nothing you can help, Larry," she answered in a low voice.

"Serious?"

"Possibly," she hesitated a moment, to continue impulsively, "What sort of a wife would I make a poor man?"

Delaney laughed. "I can't conceive such a contingency; no need of puzzling my brain to answer that conundrum."

"Well, it is one which must be answered," she said quietly.

"What under the sun do you mean, May?" He looked at her in surprise, but the light was too dim to let him catch the expression of her features.

"I mean just what I say. It is for me to make up my

Ganton & Co.

mind whether I could or should marry a poor man. The prospect is not so terrifying as that of a rich husband," she added; "it has its advantages."

"No doubt," he answered lightly. "However, if you are considering poverty-stricken candidates, I might offer myself with some degree of assurance. But Will Ganton is not a poor man."

"He has practically nothing,—a small interest in the company and his salary."

"But he is the son of John Ganton and the future head of Ganton & Co."

"If his father sees fit to make him."

"But he will."

"That depends — I must have caught the phrase from Will."

"Upon what?"

"Upon whether he marries me."

Larry Delaney could only express his surprise by a long in-drawn whistle.

"Do not say anything to Sally, or any one else," she hastened to add; "it would do no good. The situation is as it is, and I must decide for myself."

"Well, all I can say, May, is, go slow," he urged with friendly solicitude.

"On the contrary, I am more than half inclined to go ahead full speed." With that she rose and walked away, leaving Delaney to finish his cigar by himself.

"We were just talking about you," Carrie Trelway called out boldly as May Keating joined the group of young women.

"I thought so, and therefore came over in self-defence."

Blood Will Tell

"We were wondering when you and Will Ganton were to be married," the young woman continued loudly.

"I do not see how that concerns you, Carrie," May Keating said quietly; it was useless to take offence.

"If you expect me to be at the wedding you must fix the day not later than November; in December Billy and I sail for Europe."

"I should miss you and Billy — so much." The tone in which the last two words were uttered made the little group of young women laugh. One of them remarked afterward:

"May is enough for Carrie Trelway; she has a quiet way that is positively delicious."

To Mrs. Jack's acute ear it seemed as if every one at the Club was discussing a single question, When would May Keating and Will Ganton be married? — and discussing it in a manner that implied they might not be married at all. She determined to come to an understanding with May that very night; the matter had dragged too long.

When they arrived home Mrs. Jack paused just long enough to slip into a light wrapper before going to her sister's room. She found May sitting by the window in the dark. She had not even removed her hat.

"What are you doing here in the dark? Why don't you take off your hat?" Mrs. Jack asked impatiently.

Without answering, May drew the shades, turned on one of the side lights, went to the dressing-table, and began removing her hat; she knew what was on her sister's mind, and simply waited.

"I want to have a talk with you, May." Mrs. Jack's tone betrayed her irritation. "It is time something definite was decided with Will. When are you going to marry him?"

Ganton & Co.

May Keating lightly touched her hair with her fingers to remove the impression left by the hat, turned, and sat down facing her sister.

"We talked about it this afternoon, and," she continued slowly, as if coming then and there to a decision, "I think I shall marry him very soon."

"I am glad to hear that," said Mrs. Jack with a sigh of relief; "we were beginning to be the laughing-stock of the town."

"Suppose Will Ganton had n't a penny in the world but his salary, would you want me to marry him, Sally?"

The tone in which the question was put startled Mrs. Jack, but she exclaimed, "How absurd! He will be the richest young man in the city some day."

"But suppose his father should not leave him a penny — what then?"

"I don't understand you, May," Mrs. Jack said, looking at her sister anxiously. "What do you mean?"

"I mean that if Will Ganton marries me his father threatens to cut him off without a penny."

For a moment Mrs. Jack could not utter a word, and it was several seconds before she fully comprehended what her sister had said. Then the blood rushed into her cheeks and her eyes blazed with fury.

"So that is the secret of all this delay, and that is why old mother Ganton has not been to see us again. John Ganton does not think a daughter of Jem Keating is good enough for his precious son,—the old brute, I'll show him. As if he could pick and choose,—just a common butcher, a pig-sticker who can't write ten words without misspelling half of them. Oh, I know the old brute; I've heard father

Blood Will Tell

tell about his rascality. They were great friends once, and just because dad got the better of him in a deal years ago the old brute never forgot it. I knew he did not like us, but I 'll show him he can't lord it over us,— the old butcher." Mrs. Jack had risen from her seat and was walking rapidly to and fro with her small plump hands clenched and her features distorted by passion.

May knew that these fits of temper subsided after a little if fuel were not added to the flame, so she sat still and waited for her sister to recover her reason. A disagreeable feeling came over the younger girl as she heard the rough and brutal language roll from her sister's lips; could it be possible so coarse a strain permeated both their natures?

After a time the storm of wrath abated, and Mrs. Jack sank down on the couch, exclaiming:

"Well, why don't you say something! What are you going to do about it? What did you say to him?"

"That if he loved me well enough to lose a fortune for my sake, I would marry him anyway."

Mrs. Jack looked at her sister in blank amazement.

"May Keating, you 're a fool."

May could not help smiling at her sister's tone of mingled contempt and dejection.

"That may be, Sally, but I feel more like marrying Will Ganton than ever before."

"Do you mean to say you will throw yourself away on that fellow when he has n't a penny?"

"Did you not come in here to-night with the intention of urging me to marry 'that fellow,' as you call him, as soon as possible?" The query was sharply put.

"Yes; but I supposed —" Mrs. Jack floundered.

Ganton & Co.

“You supposed that he would inherit the larger share of his father’s fortune, and you intended I should marry him for his money. I understand perfectly; but now that his father threatens to cut him off if he marries me, and he is ready and willing to sacrifice every prospect for my sake, would you have me throw him over, and by doing so confess to the world that money was the first and only consideration? Could we afford to do that?”

May spoke deliberately. It was evident she had carefully weighed her words, and that she had not come to any hasty conclusion. Mrs. Jack began to feel the position as hopeless. It was useless to argue, for she knew her sister too well to attempt to move her if her mind were once fixed. Besides, might not the father relent?—it was among the possibilities, and threats of that kind were seldom carried out. To whom could John Ganton leave his money if not to Will? Would it not be a stroke of good policy for May to marry the young man, and thereby prove to the father that no mercenary motives entered into the match? Yes; it was just one of old Ganton’s tricks to make sure that no girl married his son for his money.

All these thoughts flashed through Mrs. Jack’s mind as she sat there looking at her sister and listening to what she was saying. When May definitely announced her determination to marry Will Ganton in spite of all opposition, she was surprised to hear her sister acquiesce without further protest; keen as she was, she could not read all the arguments that had flitted through Mrs. Jack’s active little brain, and Mrs. Jack did not enlighten her.

The next morning Mrs. Jack went into her husband’s room before he was up, seated herself on the side of the bed,

Blood Will Tell

and told him all that had passed between her and May the night before.

Jack Wilton listened drowsily. Mrs. Jack had so many troubles, so many squabbles and controversies, that he had long since ceased to take the lively interest in them she expected him to manifest. He liked May, and could not, for the life of him, see why John Ganton should object to Will's marrying her.

"It is n't May, Jack; it is something else, some old trouble between the old man and father. I remember hearing about it years ago. I want you to go to Mr. Ganton and have a plain talk with him. May is your sister-in-law, and it is your duty."

By this time Wilton was wide awake. He sat up in bed, his stiff brown hair standing about his head in such a tangle as to make him look exceedingly comical.

"The deuce you do!" he exclaimed. "Why, Sally, I can't go to see John Ganton. He would order me out of his office."

"It is your duty to go, Jack," Mrs. Jack insisted firmly. "You like May, don't you?"

"Of course I do. She is a bully good girl, and would make any man a fine wife."

"That is just what you must tell Mr. Ganton."

"Why, Sally, I would feel like a fool to go to John Ganton and sing May's praises. What good would that do so long as he does n't object to her personally?"

"You must find out what his objections are. He says he will not permit his son to marry your sister-in-law,— that concerns you."

Perhaps it was too early in the morning — nearly noon —

Ganton & Co.

and he was not fully awake, but Wilton could not get it through his head how John Ganton's quarrel with Jem Keating years before concerned him. Still there was his wife calmly seated on the side of the bed arguing that it did; and there was May, whom he liked immensely, and whose future happiness was involved. So at last, after many protestations, he promised to go and see John Ganton that day, and ask him his reasons for opposing the prospective union. Mrs. Jack thereupon hied herself off in triumph.

All the time he was dressing the matter weighed heavily upon Jack Wilton, and the more he thought about it the less he liked it. Twice he cut himself with his razor, and he remained so long in his bath that Mrs. Jack rapped loudly at the door to find out what he was doing and why he did not come down to breakfast. When he did come down his face wore such a sober expression the Major on seeing him called out:

"Why, papa, what 's ze matter wiz 'oo? 'Oo look sick."

"I 'm not sick. I 'm all right, Major."

"Well, 'oo look sick, anyway."

The Major proceeded to feel his papa's pulse and listen to his heart and tap his lungs precisely as the doctor did to him when he was sick. The Major loved to play doctor, and nearly everybody in the house submitted patiently to exhaustive examinations, often prolonged beyond the endurance of all except Jack and May, who never tired of the little fellow's persistence.

It was with misgivings Jack Wilton walked north in La Salle Street to the great building wherein Ganton & Co. had their offices. He knew John Ganton, not very well, but well enough to stand in considerable awe of the rough

Blood Will Tell

old man. His father and Ganton had been more or less intimately associated in several enterprises, and had always remained good friends; but while Jack Wilton had inherited his father's wealth and enough sagacity to keep it well invested, he had not inherited any of his father's devotion to business; therefore he and John Ganton met only occasionally.

He had never been in the office of Ganton & Co., and he felt very much out of place as he stood beside the railing which marked off a narrow space near the door, where intruders were temporarily confined under the supervision of an alert and officious young fellow of sixteen or seventeen, who asked in a sharp, quick tone, "Who do you wish to see?"

When Wilton said almost deferentially that he wished to see Mr. Ganton, the young fellow eyed him still more critically, as if he knew the caller had no real business with Ganton & Co. However, he took in the slip of paper on which Wilton wrote his name and soon brought back word that Mr. Ganton would be at liberty in a moment or two.

When Wilton entered the small private office of John Ganton, the latter dropped a bundle of telegrams he held in his hand and greeted his visitor cordially.

"Some time since I've seen you, Wilton. You don't come here as often as your father did."

"No; in fact, this is the first time, Mr. Ganton." Jack did not feel at all at ease, and would have liked it better if the old man had been less cordial. He knew what he had to say would not be taken kindly, and he was shocked at John Ganton's appearance. Once the personification of health and strength, his face was now drawn and yellow, and there were lines about the mouth which could only come

Ganton & Co.

from pain or suffering of some secret nature. Doubtless there was something in the young man's face that betrayed his thoughts, for John Ganton, with the sharp intuition of the sick, asked querulously:

"What's the matter? Why do you look at me that way? Do you think I look sick?"

"Why, I — that is, Mr. Ganton, I have not seen you for some time —"

"And you think me changed? Is that it?" This time there was a trace of anxiety.

"I suppose we all change more or less," Wilton answered evasively; "you must find me —"

"You're all right; there's nothing the matter with you. . . . It's my stomick, John." As he called Wilton by his first name there was something almost pathetic in the old man's accent. "It's my stomick. I'm as yellow as lemon peel. I suppose I'm bilious."

"You ought to take a rest, Mr. Ganton."

"No; that would n't do any good. I don't propose to lay down and die like a sick horse. Work's the best medicine I know of,— work, with a dose of castor oil now and then."

"I sincerely hope you will be better soon." Wilton paused, and as John Ganton waited for him to go on, continued abruptly:

"I came to see you this morning, Mr. Ganton, on a mighty unpleasant errand. Will is engaged to my wife's sister, May Keating."

At the mention of the engagement the old man, who had been sitting hunched forward in his big revolving chair, stiffened back, and all the yellow of his face disappeared before the rush of blood that indicated his anger; from

Blood Will Tell

beneath his bushy eyebrows he looked at Wilton as if he were more than half disposed to visit his fury upon him.

In as conciliatory a manner as possible Jack continued:

"I am told that you object to the match, and I came to see — to find out what the trouble is."

The old man's face worked as if he were trying to control himself; at length he blurted out:

"Who sent you here?"

Confused by the sudden query, Wilton could only stammer:

"I came myself, Mr. Ganton, no one —"

"Yes, there did, some one sent you here. You never came on your own account, John Wilton; you've got more sense than to go about meddling in what does not concern you."

"But May Keating is my sister-in-law."

"That does n't make her your sister, does it?" the old man asked with grim sarcasm. "If she was your sister, that would be different, but she is not. She is the daughter of Jem Keating; she has the old man's blood running in her veins, and rather than have a son of mine tie up to any of that dirty stock I would see him dead."

John Wilton's face flushed. The old man's language came home to him through his wife.

"You forget, Mr. Ganton, that I married one of Keating's daughters."

"No; I don't forget it; and you're not likely to forget it, if all I hear is true." The eyes under the bushy eyebrows snapped viciously, and Wilton felt his heart sink suddenly as if he had been struck heavily in a vital place. "I don't mean to hurt your feelings," the old man continued in a

Ganton & Co.

more kindly tone, as if regretting the words which had slipped between his lips; "I don't believe all I hear, but blood will tell, and I don't want any of Jem Keating's mixed with mine. . . . That's all I have to say."

John Wilton had risen from his chair, hat in hand. He, too, had nothing more to say — what could he say? How could he resent the brutal language which had struck home? Had he not invited it by his visit, by meddling in matters which did not concern him? . . . Above all, was it not true that people did talk?

As he turned on his heel and went out without a word, John Ganton half started from his chair as if to stop him and make further amends for what he had said, but he sank back, asking himself what would be the good? Even his coarse sensibilities realized that what was said could not be unsaid, — to try to explain would only make a bad matter worse.

Wilton did not tell his wife all John Ganton had said. It would have created a scene, and he did not like scenes with Mrs. Jack. But he could not disguise the unpleasant truth that Ganton would not permit his son to marry a daughter of Jem Keating; that much he had to tell his wife, though he tried in a clumsy way to tell it diplomatically. Mrs. Jack, however, was not to be deceived; her husband's embarrassment told her more than his words, and she suspected things had been said he was not willing to repeat. As she listened without a word, her small eyes flashed ominously and her round, plump cheeks became red as fire. Wilton knew the tempest was about to break.

"So," she screamed, "the old brute, the old villain, the old pig-sticker, thinks we are not good enough for him,

Blood Will Tell

and sets himself up above Jem Keating,— the old butcher! There are those who remember when he drove his own cart, and sold meat on the street,— the old sausage-maker! Now because he's rich he thinks he owns the earth; but I'll show him there are some things he can't do. I'll show him — I'll show him, the old —" Mrs. Jack was so excited that she could not sit still, but walked to and fro with her small, round fists tightly clenched.

Wilton waited for her anger to subside. At length he asked in a soft tone:

"What is to be done now, Sally?"

"What is to be done?" she exclaimed in a fresh burst of irritation; "what is to be done? Why, get rid of his precious son in some way; show him that we don't care for him and his money."

"But how?" urged Wilton, mildly. "Remember everybody knows of the engagement, and May — you must consider May, Sally. It won't do to —"

"Never you mind, May and I can take care of ourselves. We are not asking old John Ganton for any favors." At the same time Mrs. Jack appreciated, even more keenly than her husband, all the embarrassing features of the situation. What excuse could be given for breaking the engagement? Everybody would know it was on account of John Ganton's opposition and his threat to disinherit his son. That was the worst of it; people would say her sister was willing to marry the old man's money, but not his son without the money. May's chances for the future would be seriously jeopardized; and mingled with these thoughts there flitted through Mrs. Jack's scheming little brain notions of revenge on John Ganton. How could she get even with the old man? How

Ganton & Co.

could she pay him back? It was with a thrill of exultation that the thought occurred to her how glorious it would be to defy the old man to his face, by going ahead with the marriage! That would exasperate him more than anything else. She dismissed the thought instantly. Why should May throw herself away upon Will Ganton if he had no money? That would be a fine outcome after all her scheming; why, she would be the laughing-stock of the city!

When she told her sister what she had done, how Jack had called upon John Ganton, and the result of the interview, May listened, surprised and silent, and said:

"I am sorry you did it, Sally; it could do no good. You ought to have spoken to me."

"Well, I did it for the best. I thought Jack might have some influence. Any way, it's a family matter, and it was his duty."

"No; it is not a family matter, and it was not his duty to interfere; the objection is not on Jack's account, but on ours. I dare say Mr. Ganton would be glad to have Will marry into the Wilton family." The last words were uttered with a bitter ring, which did not escape Mrs. Jack, and she answered with irritation:

"That may be; but John Ganton need not hold his head so high above us. He's no better than father."

"Possibly not half so good," May Keating responded slowly; "but he has been successful, and success covers a greater multitude of sins than charity."

"Well, how are you going to get rid of the young man, May?" her sister asked suddenly. May Keating looked at Mrs. Jack's troubled face for a moment or two with a quizzical look in her dark blue eyes, and replied deliberately:

Blood Will Tell

"I don't intend to get rid of him."

Mrs. Jack looked up in amazement. "You don't mean to say, May Keating, that you really intend to marry him without a penny?"

"Yes; that is just what I mean to say, Sally. I have thought it all over, and it is the only decent thing to do. We have staked our all," she continued more bitterly, "and must play the game out. I cannot quite bring myself to tell him I accepted him only for his money. The only doubt I have is whether I should permit him to make the sacrifice,—whether I should not say no, for his own sake."

"Of course you should," Mrs. Jack interrupted eagerly, catching at the suggestion as a possible line of argument which might swerve her sister's determination; "it is not right to permit him to give up his prospects."

May Keating smiled sadly. She understood only too well the selfish thoughts underlying Mrs. Jack's sudden solicitude for Will Ganton; she knew that if her sister could then and there subject John Ganton and every member of his family to the tortures of the damned, she would take a more than Satanic pleasure in doing it.

"No, Sally, we have gone too far; if Will Ganton wishes it I shall marry him, and take my chances on bringing the father around later. If I really thought I should be the cause of his being cut off I would drop him for his own sake,—I like him well enough for that. But there's many a slip 'twixt the threat and the whip."

Mrs. Jack looked at her sister inquiringly. She could not quite make out what was passing in May's mind; however, since she was determined to go ahead regardlessly, there was nothing to be done but make the best of the situa-

Ganton & Co.

tion, and hope matters might take a more favorable turn. Perhaps John Ganton would relent, as fathers usually do; perhaps Will Ganton would do something, and the engagement might be broken for good cause; perhaps —

"Jack said John Ganton was not looking well," she exclaimed, as if an idea had suddenly struck her.

Again a faint smile hovered about May Keating's firm mouth; it was not difficult to follow the thoughts of her sister, even if they did take surprising turns.

"Did he? I am sorry to hear it," she answered indifferently.

"Yes. He said he was looking very bad,— yellow and drawn. Hasn't Will said anything about his father's health?"

"Yes, I believe so; I do not remember what, some trouble with the stomach,— nothing serious apparently."

"No one can tell. Jack says the old man looks very bad; why not wait —"

"Until the father dies," May interrupted, and continued ironically, "but you see, Sally, he may live twenty or thirty years. Besides, I should not know how to suggest such a course. Perhaps you could arrange it, or Jack might."

Mrs. Jack jumped up, impatient and angry.

"Do as you please, May Keating; but you may be sorry in the end. That's all I have to say," and she started to leave the room. But May clasped her about the neck, exclaiming with a sob in her throat:

"Oh, Sally, I am sorry now; sorry I ever met him, sorry it has all gone so far. But it can't be helped now. I shall keep my word; besides," she continued, half arguing to herself, "there is more to him than I thought. I like him better than I did."

Blood Will Tell

"But you don't love him, May," her sister interrupted quickly, "you don't love him."

"No; and yet I like him better than I did at first. Every man has his faults, and there are worse than Will Ganton — much worse," she repeated almost to herself. She drew her sister close to her, "I want you and Jack to understand if I marry him it is because I think it is the only thing to do, — there!" Before she could turn away Mrs. Jack gave her a good hug and kiss; it was not difficult to turn her impulsive heart, and she vowed to herself on the spot that she and Jack would stand by May through thick and thin.

When Mrs. Jack told Lawrence Delaney of May's determination to marry Will Ganton in spite of the father's opposition, Delaney shook his head doubtfully without saying a word.

"Well, it can't be helped anyway," said Mrs. Jack impatiently. "Why do you look so?"

"The old man is an ugly customer and apt to keep his word."

"Surely he would n't cut Will off without a cent."

"If he says he will, he'll do it."

"That would be too disgraceful." Mrs. Jack could not bring herself to believe that John Ganton would go quite so far. He might cut down Will's share in his estate; that would be bad enough, — but to cut him off entirely? It did not seem possible.

"Why can't they wait a while?" Delaney continued thoughtfully. "I saw the old man on the street this morning. He looked sick, yellow, and haggard. They say he has been looking bad lately, and it struck me there must be something

Ganton & Co.

serious the matter with him. Why not wait? If anything should happen — ”

“That ’s just what I have urged,” Mrs. Jack interrupted earnestly. “I have told May to wait, but she won’t listen to reason. She is bent on marrying Will Ganton while his father is alive, just to show the old brute she does not care for his money.”

Delaney smiled. He admired May Keating’s pluck and determination, but at the same time he thought she was acting foolishly.

“Money is too good a friend or too relentless an enemy to be treated lightly,” he commented. “I wish I had more of it.”

At Mrs. Jack’s request Delaney tried to convince May it would be the better part of discretion to wait for a time; but without success.

“There is no use talking, Larry,” she replied firmly, “my mind is made up. I was willing to sell myself for his father’s millions, and it is rather more creditable to give myself for nothing. However, I am not seeking applause. I am going to marry Will Ganton because — I am. It ’s a woman’s reason, but in this case a good one. I will take my chances.”

Delaney looked at the firmly set mouth of the young woman sitting in front of him, and felt it would be quite idle to pursue the subject further. At the same time he was curious, in a friendly way, to know the real motives that prompted her; he could not bring himself to believe it was anything like love for Will Ganton.

“I believe you are going to marry him, May, just to spite his father; to be revenged for the slur upon your own father.”

“Possibly I am, but whether I am or not, John Ganton

Blood Will Tell

and the rest of the world will be convinced that a 'Keating girl' " — there was a ring of scorn in her voice — "can marry for something besides money." After a pause, she continued in another tone: "Oh, Larry, how sick I am of it all! What is marriage anyway but a bargain and sale? People talk of marrying for love. Is there such a thing?"

That was too closely in line with Delaney's own philosophy for him to argue in opposition, but he urged:

"Admitting all that to be true, May, what are the considerations which compel you to act so hastily in this matter? I cannot see the necessity."

"I can't tell you. I hardly know myself. All I do know is, that my mind is made up. . . . Now, Larry, let's not debate the matter any more. I expect you to help me make the best of a situation which will have plenty of disagreeable features; the engagement will be formally announced, and the date of the wedding fixed, all very soon."

"I don't envy Will Ganton,— at home, I mean," Delaney hastened to add with a smile.

"That is his lookout; he has something of his father in him, and it may be a case of Greek meeting Greek."

Delaney shook his head doubtfully. He knew Will better than May knew him. While the son had something of the ugly temper and brute strength of the father, he lacked entirely those masterful qualities which made men fear the old man.

John Ganton said nothing to Will about the conversation with Wilton; he waited. He believed that when Mrs. Jack and her sister learned that in no circumstances would he countenance the match they would find a way to break it off.

Ganton & Co.

"All those girls are after is money," he said to Browning. "There's nothing they would like better than to get hold of some of mine, but they won't — not a cent, Browning, not a red cent," his voice rising as he repeated the phrase. "I'm sorry for Wilton," he continued more mildly, "he's a well-meaning fellow, but he got roped in like a steer by that Sally Keating; they say she leads him a lively dance. It's in the blood, Browning; they're rotten to the core."

Browning said nothing. He knew this talk about Will's engagement worried John Ganton, and he was sorry for the old man. Both he and his wife thought Will was making a mistake. They never entered the social circle wherein Mrs. Jack shone. Knowing her only by sight and hearsay, Mrs. Browning had all the prejudice and secret envy of the woman who is just without the exclusive line. She would have given anything to be on calling terms with Mrs. Jack, and since she was not, she lost no opportunity of repeating and accentuating every bit of gossip she heard. Returning from one of her numerous clubs one afternoon, she said to Browning:

"It's a shame the way Mrs. Jack Wilton carries on with that Lawrence Delaney! They say he is with her all the time; dining and driving and sitting about the clubs. It is scandalous. I don't see how her husband permits it, but some men are so blind. They say John Wilton is a very nice man, much too good for her." The good woman ran on in a torrent of words, her usual manner, and wound up with the question, "Who is this Delaney, anyway?"

"A stock-broker. I don't know much about him,— from New York, I believe," Browning replied without looking up from his evening paper.

Blood Will Tell

"They say he's a sort of an adventurer, and yet no one knows just who he is. He's a great friend of Will Ganton's, is n't he?"

Browning had no intention of giving his wife any definite information along that line; she would be altogether too apt to use it to some one's discomfiture,—quite likely his own.

"I suppose they meet occasionally at the clubs," he answered evasively.

"Well, I heard to-day that this Delaney is little better than a common gambler, and that Will has lost no end of money to him,—you ought to know."

The last remark was uttered in tones so pointed that Browning could not wholly ignore it without the appearance of concealing something, so he answered, with an air of frankness which threw his wife off her guard:

'There's nothing in it except that Will, like most young fellows nowadays, occasionally takes a flyer in stocks. Sometimes he wins, sometimes he loses.'

"Is he going to marry Mrs. Jack's sister?"

"How do I know?"

"Well, you ought to interest yourself if you care anything about him, for they say she is worse than her sister. She had a love affair at Newport two or three summers ago, but nothing came of it. She wants Will Ganton for his money. Those Keating girls will stop at nothing. It's a shame. You'd better talk to Will, and tell him plainly what people say. It might open his eyes."

Browning did talk to Will, not to tell him what people were saying or to open his eyes in the direction indicated by Mrs. Browning, but because he honestly thought Will was

Ganton & Co.

making a great mistake in sacrificing his future by marrying a scheming girl.

Will listened to all Browning had to say. The talk was well meant, but it did no good. A stubborn look came over the young man's face, a look Browning knew only too well as a weaker reflection of the will of the father.

"I know you mean all right, Browning, but I asked her to marry me when I thought I would have an interest in the company some day and be a rich man, and I don't propose to back out now. If father wants to cut me off, that is his lookout, — I guess I can take care of myself somehow. He's down on her just because he had some trouble with her father years ago; I don't see the sense of that."

"He's down on the daughter because he thinks she may have inherited some of her father's characteristics," Browning urged, as gently as he could.

"That's all nonsense, and you know it, Browning."

Browning did not know it — on the contrary he believed John Ganton was right, — but he could not tell Will that in so many words.

"I tell you she is the finest girl in the world, Browning, and much too good for me; when father comes to know her he will change his mind."

So that was the direction in which hope lay, that John Ganton himself would fall under the spell and yield to the young woman's charms, — well, who could tell?

Browning did venture to suggest they should wait for a time, the thought that had occurred to Delaney; but Will would not listen to it for a moment.

"Father is all right. His stomach is out of order, that

Blood Will Tell

is all. If he would quit taking big doses of castor oil and go and see a doctor he would be all right in no time."

"I wish he would see a doctor," Browning said earnestly, "I don't like his looks."

"But he won't. He's as stubborn as a mule on that point."

CHAPTER XVII

JOHN GANTON'S REMORSE

INDEED, John Ganton's condition caused Browning great anxiety. There were mornings when the old man would come down "feeling first rate," as he expressed it, but his skin never lost the yellow look, and he became thinner.

"I 'm thinning down somewhat," he said; "but that's all right. I can stand losing a little fat."

He persistently kept his mind on the bright side, and would not admit he was ill. The inquiries of acquaintances who were struck by his changed appearance, the solicitude of friends and business associates, annoyed him so that he either avoided answering their questions or replied so impatiently that soon nearly everybody with whom he came in contact understood how he felt and refrained from asking about his health. It pleased him greatly if men on meeting him remarked, "How well you are looking, Mr. Ganton!" He knew he was not looking well, and he knew they said it to flatter him, nevertheless he derived satisfaction from these hollow assurances.

In the street he made an effort to walk with the same vigor, and at conferences and directors' meetings he endeavored to suppress every sign of weakness and suffering; but in his own office it was different. There he yielded to the lassitude that frequently overcame him. Browning often found him hunched down in his big chair half dozing, with his head dropped forward on his breast and his letters

John Ganton's Remorse

and telegrams before him unread. He aroused himself with a start, and tried by sudden activity to disguise the fact he had been half asleep, but one day he said apologetically:

"Did n't sleep very well last night, Browning; there 's something wrong with my stomick. I can't eat as I used to; nearly everything I eat goes back on me. There 's a sort of dull ache down here." He put his hand on the right side of his body just below the ribs.

"It must be your liver, Mr. Ganton."

"Maybe it is, maybe it is," he repeated. "I guess I'll take a blue-pill,—that 'll fix the liver all right." He brightened up at the thought of a medicine he had not tried for a long time. "I had n't thought of that. I can't eat as I used to," he repeated almost mechanically.

"Don't you think you ought to see a doctor?" Browning ventured to suggest again. The old man's face instantly clouded over and he said curtly:

"I 'm not ready to die just yet."

The suggestion of a doctor acted like a tonic. It braced him up, and for a time he seemed to fight his ills and pains,—but only for a time. The dull pain in his right side came back with increasing frequency, and in spite of all his doses he could not overcome the discomfort felt after every meal.

Out at the Yards one day he met old Doc Ruggles, the veterinary surgeon who for a stipulated sum per annum looked after Ganton & Co.'s horses. Everybody and nearly every horse in the Yards knew Doc. He was a character; he went about with his hands stained brown from the mixtures he used, and with his clothes smelling of horse liniment.

"Doc knows his business," the men were accustomed to say; "if he can't cure a horse he 'll kill him."

Ganton & Co.

He took no stock in the more modern methods of the young graduates of veterinary colleges; Doc had acquired his knowledge by hard knocks and still harder kicks. Not infrequently a horse manifested its objection to the bitter doses and hot irons, and hoofed Doc across the stable, but that was invariably accepted as a good sign,—the horse would recover. He had passed through the rough school of experience, and his only diploma was a supreme confidence in his own ability. He practised in his shirt sleeves and a pair of stained and discolored overalls, once blue. If he did not know what ailed a horse he gave it something that brought on symptoms he did understand, whereupon he doctored those symptoms. His method was summed up in strong doses and big blisters. He administered his medicines by tying a horse's head to a rafter and squirting a quart of evil smelling and still more evil tasting liquid down the poor animal's throat. There was not much variety in the mixtures, as the same formula seemed to answer for every equine ill, and there was no fooling or dilly-dallying or coddling. The horse was expected to take his medicine and go to work the next morning, and those that did not die overnight usually met Doc's expectations.

John Ganton had known Ruggles for more than thirty years, and his confidence in the medical skill of the old veterinary was measured by Doc's confidence in himself, — nothing could shake it.

When they met at the Yards on the day referred to, Doc was grinding a brown powder in an old iron mortar, and did not look up until Ganton called out:

“Well, Doc, how are all the horses?”

Straightening up, Ruggles was about to reply when he

John Ganton's Remorse

caught sight of John Ganton's face, and was so shocked he could not conceal it.

"The horses are all right, Mr. Ganton. A few down with the epizoo-tic, no more than ordinary. But what's the matter with you? You look sicker 'n any horse I've got on my hands."

A painful smile spread over John Ganton's yellow features, as he tried to make light of his condition.

"I'm all right. It's my stomick, Doc. I can't eat as I used to."

"I should say it's your liver from that complexion of your'n,—too much bile."

"Do you think that's it?" the old man asked eagerly. "Browning said it must be my liver. Look here, Doc," he blurted out, "what's good for the liver?"

"Well," Ruggles drawled as he looked the old man over critically, "if you was a horse I could cure you in about two shakes of a lamb's tail. What you need is a mixture to knock that bile out of you,—that's all you need. I can fix you up something I take myself, but it won't taste as sweet as honey; I don't use any sugar-coatin' on my pills." Doc laughed, for he always said that to the men in the Yards when he dosed them for their occasional ailments. "I don't give no baby food that slips down so easy you don't know it's there."

"Go ahead, Doc," the old man eagerly replied; "fix me up something, and if you can bring me around all right I'll make it worth your while."

"I'll send a bottle of stuff around to the office in an hour. You take a tablespoonful before going to bed and in the morning soon as you get up, and if you don't feel like

Ganton & Co.

a new man in a week I'll take down my sign. It's bile, that's all it is."

Ruggles was so sure of his opinion that John Ganton felt greatly reassured, and walked off in better spirits than he had been in for some time.

"He knew just as soon as he looked at me what was the matter," he said to himself; "that comes of experience. I wish I had seen Doc before. He's better than any of those fellows down town who charge ten dollars for just looking at a man, and then don't know what's the matter more'n half the time."

At night when John Ganton swallowed the first tablespoonful of the rankly bitter mixture, his face betrayed his disgust.

"What are you taking now, John?" his wife timidly asked.

"Was out at the Yards this afternoon, and Ruggles — you remember Doc Ruggles? — said all I needed was something for my liver, so he gave me this medicine."

"Why, he is only a horse doctor. Ain't you afraid?"

"I'd as soon trust him as any one. This is something he takes himself when his liver is out of order. Ugh! but it's bitter. You have n't a lump of sugar, have you?"

"No, but I can run down and get you one in a minute."

When she returned Ganton was sitting on the edge of the bed, leaning forward with his hands on his knees. He looked so sick as he sat there half undressed she was alarmed.

"Oh, John!" she exclaimed, "I wish you would see a doctor."

"No, no," he answered impatiently; "I don't want no

John Ganton's Remorse

doctor. I'll come out all right. It's my liver,—that's all." As he spoke he passed his hand slowly across the pit of his stomach, as if in pain.

"Do you feel bad?" she anxiously inquired.

"There is a sort of a dull ache around here, and now and then a shooting pain. I never had anything like it before, Maria, and it hangs on so." There was a helpless ring to his voice that was pathetic. His wife had never before seen him sick for more than a day or two, and then only with some insignificant ailment which readily yielded to his heroic treatment. Now, however, he seemed to suffer nearly all the time, and she could see that so far from improving from week to week, he got worse; his skin became more yellow, his features more drawn, he lost flesh; more and more frequently he sat down at the table and suddenly pushed his plate to one side, saying, "I can't eat anything, Maria, my appetite's gone all at once." At other times when he did eat, the food distressed him, and he sometimes lay down for half an hour or more, to complain of "wind on my stomick, and shooting pains."

For a long time he impatiently rejected every offer on her part to try to do something to relieve him, but of late he had submitted to the application of a hot-water bag to the pit of his stomach when the pains were very severe. That helped; under the gentle radiation of the heat the disagreeable sensations subsided, and often he fell asleep, to awake much refreshed. When down town, he could not rest after luncheon, and there was no one to get him a hot-water bag, so he was obliged to get along as best he could. He soon learned that if he ate little luncheon he could get through the afternoon very well; some days he got very hungry, but

Ganton & Co.

either ate nothing at all or drank only a glass of milk, which did not distress him so much as solid food.

He took Ruggles's bitter brown mixture faithfully as directed, and strange to say, felt much better. Each time he took the awful dose he experienced the satisfaction of a man who deals his foe a vigorous and telling blow. Like most men, he had faith in mixtures in proportion to their disagreeable qualities, treating disease as if it were something to be reached only by sledge-hammer shocks.

For some time he ate better, his skin regained some of its normal color, his eye became brighter, and he felt, as he expressed it, more like himself. Browning was quick to notice the improvement, and congratulated him.

"That 's right, Browning; I have n't felt so well in a long time. Would you like to know who did it?" He looked at Browning with a cunning twinkle in his gray eyes. "None of your high-falutin' pill-peddlers down town here; it was Doc Ruggles out at the Yards. He gave me some medicine that fixed my liver all right, and I can eat now just about as well as ever."

"Well, one can never tell, Mr. Ganton. Sometimes a home-made remedy is just as good as a fancy prescription."

"Better, Browning,— better, I say. A good old-fashioned dose goes straight to the spot; I would n't give a picayune for a cart-load of the lollipops they fix up nowadays at the drug stores. But I tell you it's bitterer 'n gall,"— the grimace on the old man's features expressed the disagreeable nature of the mixture more eloquently than words.

During the weeks he felt better John Ganton plunged into business with renewed energy; it was as if he had been taking a vacation, holding aloof for a time and gather-

John Ganton's Remorse

ing up his strength. He kept his great office force in a turmoil; he was active at the Yards, on the Board, and on 'Change; he made his influence felt in each of the great packing centres, and he even made a trip to Omaha and Kansas City, and planned large additions to his already enormous plants at those two points. With something like his old interest he read the cables and letters from the foreign representatives, and seemed to know intuitively what was going on in distant quarters of the globe; he never debated a moment the answer to be sent, or the instructions to be given,—it was one of his extraordinary characteristics that before he had finished reading a letter or even a telegram, the answer shaped itself in his mind, and it was invariably sent as first conceived; no one ever caught him sitting with a letter or a telegram in his hand wondering what reply he should make. To a business proposition, whether made in conference or on the street, he always gave a definite answer on the spot, unless, as often happened, it suited his purpose to procrastinate. Whatever his course of action, his decision was immediate and irrevocable. "No man can afford to change his mind," he often said; "it's cheaper in the end to go wrong once in a while than get in the habit of thinking what's best to do." All who did business with him had a wholesome respect for this characteristic; they soon learned to make him no proposition they were not ready to stand by, for he never gave them time to withdraw.

"The old man trades so quickly it takes one's breath away," Range Salter remarked one day after a trying five minutes, at the end of which he found he had involved the Union Company in an agreement highly advantageous to Ganton & Co.

Ganton & Co.

He was quite as ready and willing to do business in the street as in his office; it mattered not. "The time to do business is all the time, that 's my motto," he said whenever any one suggested taking a matter up at a more convenient opportunity. If a man asked for an appointment he invariably inquired what was wanted, and nine times out of ten disposed of the matter on the spot. He was a good waiter when he wanted to wait; no one could prolong negotiations more exasperatingly when he needed time to secure some advantage.

"He 's the slowest man to come to a decision I ever met," a New Yorker once remarked.

"Then you'd better look out, for the chances are he is moving like a streak of greased lightning behind your back," his friend answered.

During the days he was feeling so much better and taking renewed interest in business, he found on his desk one morning a cable in cipher from John. He noticed it was sent from London, instead of Liverpool. When translated it read:

"Italian government about to make large contracts for meats and canned goods; contract may be secured through influence of South-Atlantic line; prompt action necessary."

Without pausing to reread the message, he called for Browning, gave the necessary orders to get the Rome and Naples representatives at work, dictated a telegram to Sanford in New York, then, showing Browning the cable, remarked:

"The young fellow seems to be able to sit up and take notice; I wonder where he got that tip."

John Ganton's Remorse

"MacMasters says he has a long head."

"We may make something of him yet, if he 'll get some of his fool notions out of his noddle."

Browning said nothing, as he had his own opinion concerning the young man. The old man leaned back in his chair and continued:

"The trouble nowadays, Browning, is boys are educated too much. Colleges are all right enough in the old country, where men don't have to work, but they don't go in America. A new country's got to have brain and muscle, and boys must work, and work young, or they will get left at the post. What good would a college have been in California in '49 or in Chicago fifty years ago? Do they need a college in the Klondike? I guess not; they need men and women, not a lot of sickly students. There is a time for all things, even learning, but America is not ripe for too much learning. Another generation or so, and this country will go in for colleges and universities and learning to beat the band; just now business is the thing. Ganton & Co. is bigger than any college,—the fellows we graduate amount to something."

In his way John Ganton had shrewd notions concerning the directions in which the energies of a country ought to be applied; he had no particular antipathy to higher education in itself, but he thought the time devoted to it in America mostly wasted; he could not see that it helped in business, and in the case of his own son he was quite sure university life had destroyed what little aptitude for practical affairs the boy had ever had.

The contracts with the Italian government were closed, largely through the friendly though secret intervention of

Ganton & Co.

the South-Atlantic Company, which, in turn, profited from exceedingly favorable transportation agreements. The competitors of Ganton & Co. put in lower bids, but their offers were rejected for one reason or another. "What's the use of bidding!" exclaimed the president of the International Company, angrily; "the old man has a cinch on this foreign business. I believe he owns every court in Europe."

About half-past five one afternoon, when most of the office force had gone for the day, John Ganton was still at his desk, poring over papers and reports and making figures on a piece of blank paper with a short, stubby pencil. Though not much of a writer, he was exceedingly quick at figures, and could run up long columns at a glance, and carry results in his head so long as he had any use for them. In transactions of great magnitude and complexity he therefore seldom had to refer to memoranda, and always knew what he was talking about, a trait which gave him a decided advantage over most men with whom he had dealings, as they made mistakes where he did not. In addition, he not only knew all about the business of Ganton & Co., but all about the business of each of the principal competitors of Ganton & Co.

At the moment he was engaged in comparing the profits of the International, the Union, and Borlan Bros.; the profits of Ganton & Co. should exceed the earnings of the other three combined, but under the energetic management of Allan Borlan the business of Borlan Bros. had so increased that for the first time the footings did not result so favorably to Ganton & Co.; as nearly as he could get at the facts the profits of the three companies now just about equalled his

John Ganton's Remorse

own. A frown gathered over his face, and his tightly closed lips worked in and out mechanically as he ran the stubby pencil over the figures before him; so absorbed was he that he did not look up when some one entered his private office, but simply asked sharply:

"Well, what is it?"

"I called to see you on a matter of business," was the reply, in a voice that was familiar and yet did not belong to the office. Swinging about, he was surprised to see George Borlan.

"Why, Borlan, I thought it was Browning or some of the boys in the office; sit down,—sit down," he repeated cordially; as Borlan took a chair and dropped his hat on the floor beside him, John Ganton continued in a tone which betrayed his anxiety, and at the same time no little embarrassment, "How is Allan getting on?"

George Borlan looked at the old man a moment before replying, as if on the point of saying something that might not be pleasant, but if he had such a thought he repressed it.

"No better, Mr. Ganton. The doctors say there is only one chance, and that is an operation. By lifting a piece of the skull they may relieve the pressure on the brain, but they are not sure, they are not sure of anything. He may die, but we are going to take the chance."

George Borlan could not hide his emotion, his voice trembled and he rose from his chair, dug his hands into his pockets, and strode over to the window, where he remained several minutes apparently looking out on the street below.

John Ganton was shuffling the papers on his desk nervously,—he did not know what to say.

Ganton & Co.

"It's too bad, Borlan," he murmured, "it's too bad. Maybe he'll come out all right yet, maybe —"

"I did not come to talk about that," George Borlan interrupted rather sharply as he turned from the window to his seat; "though it is Allan's condition which in a way is the occasion of my being here." He paused a second and John Ganton waited. "He was the life and soul of our business. I am tired and sick of it, and would have retired long ago if Allan had not been coming on. Now that he is no longer able to take any part in the management of the business I want to dispose of it. I want to get rid of it, and I'm willing to sell the business and good will for less than it is worth. You once said that if we ever cared to sell out to let you know. There is a statement showing our investment here and in Kansas City, the business and our profits for the last five years. There is our balance-sheet. We are prepared to guarantee our inventories and all bills and accounts receivable. Does the matter interest you, Mr. Ganton?"

In business George Borlan was always quick, sharp, and to the point; he would have made a great trader except that he did not care a great deal about making money. "He is too fond of books to make a first-class business man," his associates often said; but when he put his mind on business he could accomplish almost as much in a given time as John Ganton himself.

The old man glanced at the two sheets handed him, and at the figures on his desk as if to verify the footings; he pushed all the papers to one side indifferently.

"What do you want for your business, Borlan?" he asked as quietly as if he had been purchasing a pair of horses.

John Ganton's Remorse

"Five million dollars in cash or securities. It does n't matter which."

"I will give you six millions. Make out your papers to-morrow, with formal deeds and transfers to follow within thirty days."

George Borlan looked at the old man in blank astonishment. He thought he had not heard aright.

"I said five millions, Mr. Ganton."

"And I said six."

"But —"

"I know what your business is worth, Borlan, better 'n you do yourself. There are the figures. I was just looking them over when you came in. I know what you made last year, and I know what you are doing this year."

"All that was due to Allan."

"Don't you suppose I know that?" the old man shouted irritably. "Don't you suppose I keep track of what 's going on at the Yards? Take that extra million and spend every cent of it in trying to get your brother cured."

There was a strange ring to John Ganton's voice as he uttered the last words. Could it be he looked upon this extra payment as a sort of atonement for any part he may have had in the beginning of the strike? Could it be he felt in any wise responsible for the rioting and disorder that led up to the assault? These thoughts flashed through Borlan's mind; he had his own convictions, but he had not thought it possible the coarse fibre of John Ganton responded to any such reflections and emotions. Yet there was something in the tone of the old man which made Borlan feel that beneath the uncouth exterior there might be after all a heart cast in a better mould.

Ganton & Co.

After his caller had left the office, John Ganton did not again look at the paper on his desk; he sat for some time in his big chair apparently lost in thought, and he was not thinking of the purchase of the business of Borlan Bros., or of the extra million of dollars he had given for it. That transaction was closed and past; Browning would attend to the details and pay the money as soon as the papers could be executed. The magnitude of a transaction never affected him, in fact, he often spent more time on a small deal than on a large; he would haggle with a waiter over the amount of his bill, or wait while a newsboy ran across the street to get four pennies in change for his nickel; but a purchase involving millions never bothered him a moment.

No; he was not thinking of business as he sat there alone. The big office was now deserted by all save the janitor's assistants, who were emptying the contents of the waste-paper baskets into large sacks. He was thinking of the young man who only a few weeks before had entered that very office and pleaded with him to stand firm in the impending strike, who alone had fought the strikers for two weeks, who had denounced the leaders to their faces, who had done more than any one else to expose the corruption and dishonesty of those leaders, and who had fallen victim to the vengeance of the men he so openly and fearlessly denounced; those were the thoughts which haunted John Ganton, and for the first time since he had taken the mixture fixed up by Ruggles, his face assumed a sallow hue, and he felt a knife-like pain shoot through his stomach. He had been feeling so well, comparatively speaking, that the pain startled him as a vivid reminder of his former sufferings. When he arose to go he said to himself, "I must telephone Doc for another

John Ganton's Remorse

bottle of that mixture, and ask him to make it a leetle stronger.'

The purchase of Borlan Bros. by Ganton & Co. made a sensation on the Street and at the Yards; it placed the International and the Union at a still greater disadvantage in competition with the big company.

"Why did n't you tell us you wanted to sell out, and give us a chance to buy?" Range Salter asked in a disappointed tone when he met George Borlan.

"You would have wanted a week to consider the matter, and a month to go over the inventories and accounts; I closed with the old man in less than fifteen minutes."

"I 'll wager a penny you had to sell at his price," Range Salter retorted.

'You are right; I did accept the price he fixed.'

"I thought so. When it comes to driving a bargain Ganton's a tough customer; you might have done better if you had taken a little more time and dealt with us."

"I hardly think so. We are entirely satisfied with the deal."

As Borlan walked away Range Salter muttered to himself:

"I 'll bet the old man took advantage of the condition of Allan Borlan and got the business for nothing,— 't was too good a chance to lose."

There were rumors that all the big companies were about to get together in one combination, that competition would be stifled, and the prices of meat and all other products of the Yards materially advanced. Such a consolidation had been frequently suggested. Clever promoters from New York

Ganton & Co.

had called on John Ganton a number of times to discuss the matter, but he received them with scant courtesy, and listened impatiently to what they had to say. The president of the bank in which he was the largest stockholder had tried several times to persuade him a big combination would be to his advantage, but he responded curtly: "I can't see it that way. We are getting all the business we want, and when we want more, we 'll reach out for it."

Combinations and consolidations were in the air, and his associates could not understand his opposition to the tendency of the hour, quick as he was to approve pools, price agreements, trade arrangements, and every device known which would have the effect of regulating supply and keeping up prices. But it was charged more or less openly that the salesmen and managers of Ganton & Co. did not always faithfully observe these agreements, that they were kept when the old man wanted them kept, and broken when his attention was conveniently bestowed elsewhere; Ganton & Co. had the reputation of never losing any business by keeping faith with a competitor

He could see no reason why he should merge his individuality in a large combination, even though he were placed at the head. That meant nothing to him, as he was the head of the packing industry anyway; no one disputed his supremacy. If a competitor wanted to sell out at a price, that was another matter, he would buy; but as for taking in a lot of stockholders and directors and officers for whom he had no use, the suggestion did not appeal to him; he was too fond of running his own business to suit himself to tolerate the intervention of outsiders. The corporate organization of Ganton & Co. was hardly more than nominal, just sufficient

John Ganton's Remorse

to comply with the law; with the exception of Browning and Will, the directors were clerks in the office, and the board met only to pass such formal resolutions as were necessary to carry out John Ganton's personal wishes.

"When I get so old I can't run this business myself I'll get out and make room for others; but not before," the old man said to the assistant of a great New York banker, who was vainly trying to persuade him that a consolidation would take part of the load off his shoulders.

"Trusts are all right enough down East, where you fellows get down at ten in the morning and quit at one on the days you're not playing golf. It takes a lot of you to do the work of one man, and the bigger the combination the more holidays you have. Things are different out here, where we're not looking for holidays; I don't need no rest; and when I get ready to sell out I'll let you know."

It was seldom he expressed himself at such length, but on this occasion his caller represented a house of so much importance in the financial world, that he could not very well avoid the interview; besides, it flattered the old man to think the great men of Wall Street should send their trusted lieutenants to Chicago to see if it were not possible to organize a gigantic packing corporation, with him at the head.

A few weeks later two specialists came on from New York to perform the operation on Allan Borlan. The case was baffling because there was no outward sign of the injury, yet it was of vital importance to know precisely where to open the skull. At length, after days of observations and tests, the great man to whom was intrusted the responsibility of saying where and when to operate placed his finger upon a certain

Ganton & Co.

spot a little above and behind the ear, and said in a tone of conviction:

"There, the seat of the trouble is there, within a space easily covered by a half-dollar."

He proved to be right, for when they trepanned the skull at that point and removed the pressure a marvellous change occurred

Even while partially under the influence of the anæsthetic the features of the sick man lost the expression of vacuity and indifference; they became set and firm. The lines about the mouth hardened, the lips moved, and as the effects of the ether disappeared, Allan Borlan uttered in the tone of a man threatened by some great danger, the one word "Ballard!"

"He saw the man who struck him," the great specialist remarked in a low voice, and those about the table listened intently, but Borlan's eyes closed, and he relapsed into unconsciousness.

Days passed before he was strong enough to give an account of the events of the night he was assaulted, but he slowly recovered his strength and all his faculties.

He had caught a glimpse of his assailant as the man darted out from the shadow of one of the stables. It was Ballard. But when they sought to arrest him he had disappeared. Months afterwards it was reported he had been killed in a brawl somewhere in the great Northwest, where men so often lose their lives in trying to lose themselves.

CHAPTER XVIII

FATHER AND SON

BEYOND question John Ganton was a sick man. In two weeks he had grown so much worse, had become so yellow and haggard, that his more intimate associates ceased to comment on his appearance one way or the other. That was a bad sign; he had gone through the three stages of human sympathy: the first, when those about him noticed signs of ill-health and inquired sympathetically how he felt; the second, when they endeavored to cheer him up and disguise the progress of the disease by telling him how much better he was looking; and the third, when his appearance was such that idle words were useless, and even Browning remained silent.

In spite of all this, in spite of the dull ache which never left his side and of the excruciating pains which now and then doubled him up in agony, in spite of the distress which nearly all food gave him, in spite of unmistakable outward and inward signs of grave trouble of some kind, with indomitable will John Ganton persuaded himself that it was only some trouble with stomach and liver, which would right itself in time. In his long and hard life he had had too many attacks of biliousness and of indigestion, due to bolting poor food half cooked, to worry over similar symptoms now. Heroic doses of castor oil and blue-pills had always brought him around, and he would come out all right now, he kept saying to himself.

Ganton & Co.

He had tried another bottle of Ruggles's mixture, more bitter and worse smelling, if anything, than the first. He had taken double doses, and again for a few days he felt better. The feeling of relief confirmed him in the conviction it was his liver which needed "stirring up," but this time the improvement did not last. The pains came back sharper than ever, he lost flesh, his clothes hung loosely on his big frame, his cheeks were thin and sallow, his gray eyes, so keen and piercing, became dull and leaden. When by himself he sat and stared at his hands, first at one and then at the other. He could not understand why they should be so thin and so bad in color.

He had always been in the habit of walking a great deal, considering a carriage effeminate; but now he was driven to and from his office. Even when he attended a directors' meeting or a conference more than a block or two away, he called a cab.

No one dared talk with him about his condition. At home he was so morose and silent that if his wife merely asked him how he felt he answered so irritably that she soon ceased to say a word. But her eyes, half filled with tears, followed him as he moved slowly and painfully about the house; she knew he was sick, though she did not realize how sick he was so clearly as those who saw him less often. Will's mind was so preoccupied with his own affairs and with the pending interview, — an interview he had postponed from week to week, hoping a favorable opportunity would present itself, — that he had not noticed his father's condition particularly. He knew his father was not well, but supposed, of course, he would get better.

Browning, more clearly than any one, appreciated the

Father and Son

serious nature of the ailment. He knew that there was something wrong; something that no ordinary remedies could reach. He could see that the trouble was progressing rapidly, and that unless checked the result would certainly be fatal. He even went so far as to talk with his own family physician, a good, level-headed practitioner of the old school, but not a brilliant man. Browning described every symptom he could recall, and had the doctor drop in the office one day so he might catch a glimpse of the old man without the latter suspecting the presence of a physician.

"It is the liver," the doctor said emphatically, as John Ganton passed slowly by Browning's desk to his private office. "Nothing but an examination can disclose just what the trouble is. It may be only a bad case of jaundice with acute indigestion; but he ought to consult a physician."

Browning felt relieved to hear it might be only jaundice after all,—as Ruggles out at the Yards asserted,—but he asked:

"If it's jaundice why does n't he get better? He has taken no end of medicines for his liver."

"Too many, perhaps. It takes time to cure jaundice. We have to get at the seat of the trouble, and ordinary liver pills may do more harm than good."

"Then you don't consider his condition alarming, doctor?" Browning inquired anxiously.

"Not necessarily. At the same time if I had his color I should lose no time in doing something for myself."

Browning ventured to tell the sick man what he had done and what the doctor had said. He listened in silence, and when Browning had concluded, instead of the outburst

Ganton & Co.

of anger which his faithful manager more than half expected, simply remarked,

"Perhaps he's right, Browning; that's just what Doc Ruggles says; it's my liver and stomick."

"But won't you go and see a physician, Mr. Ganton?" Browning asked earnestly.

"What's the use, Browning, what's the use? Your man's as good as any, and he says it's my liver and stomick, and that's what Doc Ruggles says. They don't any of them know much of anything."

The old man, as he sat there leaning forward in his big chair, his left hand resting upon his stomach as if to quiet the pain which hardly ever left him now, looked so thin and yellow and sick that Browning felt the tears spring to his eyes. He was as attached to John Ganton as a faithful dog to his harsh but not unkind master. Moved by the sympathy he felt, he ventured to say:

"Mr. Ganton, you are a sick man, sicker than you realize. For weeks you have been getting worse and worse. I have watched you, and everybody in the office has seen the change. Unless you do something for yourself it will not be long before you won't be able to come down at all, and then what would we all do? What would become of the business?"

The words were out before Browning paused to think. At the suggestion that he would not be able to come down to the office, that he would not be able to direct the affairs of Ganton & Co. as he had always done, the old man straightened back in his chair and looked at Browning so strangely that the latter was confused, and stammered:

"I do not mean, Mr. Ganton that — that —"

"I know what you mean, Browning," the old man said

Father and Son

slowly; "I know what you mean, and I guess you're right. If this pain don't let up soon it will get the better of me, sure. It is hard work to move about as it is. You say the boys in the office notice it, Browning?"

"They cannot help seeing you are not well. Of course they don't —"

"I know, I know," he interrupted hurriedly. "If I don't feel better in a day or two I will go and see your doctor. He's as good as any, I guess. He says it's my liver and stomick, and that's just what Doc Ruggles says."

It was pathetic, the old man's distrust of physicians and his faith in the horse doctor at the Yards; but all his life he had looked upon doctors as fit only for the imaginary complaints of old women. He did not believe in their nostrums; as for surgery, he often said he would never let them "stick him like a pig," carrying his prejudice so far that it was next to impossible to get him to contribute toward the erection or maintenance of any hospital, though in his own way he was liberal in his contributions to public institutions. This prejudice had its origin in the fact that his mother had died after an operation when he was a child, and he had always heard the neighbors say that the doctors had killed her. Just what ailed her, and just what the operation was, he never understood, only that she had gone to the hospital and after a few weeks had died. The mystery surrounding it all made so great an impression on his childish mind that all his life long he never passed a hospital without involuntarily looking at the great walls, the big doors, the driveway for the ambulances and undertakers' wagons, and wondering whether any one was being cut up and killed inside. Considering that his own daily life was spent

Ganton & Co.

amidst blood and slaughter, and remembering his utter ignorance of surgery and the wonders it accomplishes, these notions were not so very queer.

After Browning left him he tried to work, to look over the papers on his desk; but he could not rid himself of the thought that it might be true that in a few weeks or months he would not be sitting at that desk, but would be in his bed a sick and dying man,—pshaw! how absurd for him to think of dying! Why, he had just turned sixty, in the prime of life, and was perfectly well up to a month or so ago. When did the trouble begin? he asked himself, and tried to think. Was it before the strike or after? It was before, for he could remember several times during the spring his stomach had troubled him a little after eating, but that was just “wind on the stomick,” he said to himself, that did n’t amount to anything. “I was all right up to the time of the strike, and I’ve been getting worse since.” He looked at his hands, turning them over slowly. “How thin and yellow they are!” he muttered, “and they ain’t stronger ’n a baby’s.” His thoughts turned to the great business he had built up. What would become of that if anything happened to him? Who would take his place? The possibility of the great organization disintegrating and falling prey to the rapacity of his competitors embittered him, and he gritted his teeth together in the determination to live and “fool them all yet.” But those pains,—how they did come and go! He pressed his hand upon his right side and leaned forward, beads of sweat starting out upon his forehead. Would they never cease? would nothing reach them? Yes; he must see a doctor, and that, too, right soon if he did not get better. There was always the hope of being better the next day.

Father and Son

He had no time to be ill, and he could not afford to die. The thought of death terrified him,—strangely enough, for he was no coward, and had faced dangers and death in many forms without flinching. Yet to think of dying inch by inch, day by day, to see health and strength and life slipping away from week to week, that filled him with fear and dread; he could not stand it.

He fumbled with the papers before him, but when, an hour later, Browning asked him concerning certain telegrams, he replied that he had not read them.

“There is a letter from John,” Browning said.

“Is there?” he asked listlessly. “I will come to it.” He picked up a bunch of telegrams, but after reading two or three, he dropped them and shuffled through the papers for the letter; just why he should drop the more important telegrams to read the letter he could not say, but it was seldom the office received any letter from John Ganton, and when he did write it was always curtly and to the point regarding some matter of importance; his father had learned to rely upon these brief, business-like letters for accurate information concerning much of their foreign business. When found at last the letter in question simply said:

“I would suggest a change in Vienna, as the office there has lost several important contracts through lack of diligence. Schiffers at Berlin would do better at Vienna; he is an Austrian by birth and has a valuable acquaintance. To secure the Austrian business a representative should be kept at Buda-Pesth, a man who can entertain and make friends.”

That was all; the letters were invariably addressed to Ganton & Co., and were formally signed. The young man

Ganton & Co.

had not written a personal letter to his father since he landed on the other side.

Something like a smile stole over the old man's features as he read the short letter. He had known for some time the Vienna representative was inefficient, but he had not been able to place his hand on just the man for the place. He had never thought of Schiffers,—the very man, educated, polished, tactful, secretive. He had done well at Berlin, but the Hamburg office could take care of Berlin for a time, and Schiffers could go to Vienna. The idea of a man at Buda-Pesth had never occurred to him, but it was just the scheme, considering the jealousy which existed between the two capitals. It required less than five minutes to give Browning instructions to make the changes.

"John seems to have a pretty clear head on his shoulders," the latter remarked.

"He keeps his eyes and ears open, that's sure," John Ganton replied; "for a young fellow who made so poor a start he's doing very well."

When Browning had gone, the old man found himself at last comparing his two sons. As he sat there thinking, the reports of Will's engagement to May Keating occurred to him, and an ugly frown gathered on his forehead. He had said nothing, he was waiting for Will to speak,—but if the boy should marry that girl! He clenched his bony fist, and a vindictive look came into his gray eyes; on that point he was relentless.

On Sunday morning John Ganton, for the first time in his life so far as he could remember, remained in bed. When he tried to get up about seven o'clock he felt so sick at his

Father and Son

stomach he was obliged to lie down again immediately. No one knew he felt so sick, for he made no complaint, and did not so much as groan as he lay flat on his back in the effort to conquer the nausea. His wife, an early riser like himself, was already below stairs. He was alone; ashamed of his weakness, he once more tried to sit up, for a moment sitting on the side of the bed bent forward with his elbows on his knees. The effort was unavailing, the feeling of nausea overcame him.

The whiteness of the pillow made his face look yellower and more haggard than ever. Where his night-dress was unbuttoned at the throat it could be seen that beneath the coarse sandy hair covering his chest, the skin was of the same unhealthy hue. The morning was cool, so he pulled the sheet and a woollen blanket over him, and lay very still, to see if he could not get over the feeling of sickness, repeating to himself, "I'll be all right in a minute; it's my stomick." The thought came to him if he took his medicine he might feel better, so propping himself up on one elbow he reached for the square black bottle on the stand near the head of the bed, and without attempting to measure a dose, took a big swallow. "Ugh!" he exclaimed, and shut his lips tightly together to keep the mixture down.

"There, I guess I'll feel better in a minute," he muttered as he sank down on his back, and such was his faith in the virtue of the medicine that after a time he did get up and even went so far as to get to his clothes and attempt to dress. But again he was forced to get back into bed. The sharp pains which shot through his right side were like a knife at his vitals, and in spite of himself he groaned and pressed both hands on the spot that hurt. It seemed to him

Ganton & Co.

that there was a sort of lump, a hard place in his side, and that all the pains and soreness centred there. "I had n't noticed that before," he said to himself as he felt around just below the ribs. Then he looked very carefully but he could not see there was any swelling. He looked first at one side, then the other; yes, the right side did look a little fuller, but perhaps it was always that way. He passed his hand carefully from one side to the other. The soreness was all on the right side, and beyond any doubt there was a kind of a lump just below the ribs,—that was curious, what could it be? For the moment he forgot his nausea and pains and sat up in bed to get a better look at his side; but when he sat up the lump disappeared beneath the ribs, until he could no longer feel it. Yet when he lay back, it was plain to the touch, and now that he knew where to look, he could see a swelling outside. He wondered why he had not noticed it before. It did not hurt to rub the spot, so the lump was not very sensitive. He knew enough about lumps and swellings in cattle to know it was nothing in the nature of an abscess or a boil. It must be some sort of a tumor. The thought worried him,—a tumor has to be removed, or it grows and grows until it kills. But the very thought of an operation made him shiver; for an instant he saw the red streak left by the keen knife as it passed rapidly through the skin over the swelling, and with his mind's eye he followed the gush of blood as it ran down the side of his body. It made his flesh creep, for there was nothing he dreaded or feared so much as the surgeon's knife; he hated the sight of trained nurses in their uniforms walking the streets so coolly and indifferently,—what did they care whether their patients lived or died?

Father and Son

He lay there so long that his wife came upstairs to see why he had not joined her at breakfast. When he heard her footsteps he hastily pulled the clothes over him. He did not want her to know anything about the lump in his side, and did not propose that any one should know. Perhaps it was only a strain or something of the kind, and would go down in a few days.

"What is the matter, John?" Mrs. Ganton asked in surprise, as she entered the room and found him still in bed. "Are you sick?"

"No; it's my stomick. I feel a little sick to my stomick — I guess I'll lie still for a while."

Mrs. Ganton looked at him earnestly. She could see the changes in his appearance during the past few weeks; she had never seen her big, burly husband sick in bed before, and it frightened her. She put her thin hand on his forehead to learn if he had any fever; he did not turn away impatiently, and she knew from that how sick he felt, for usually he resented all evidences of sympathy.

"Can you eat anything?" she inquired softly.

"No; I don't want anything, Maria. My stomick's all upset. I'll feel better in a little while."

"Let me get you a little soda and hot water. That settles the stomach better than anything I know of." She waited a second, half expecting him to reject the suggestion impatiently; but as he said nothing, she trotted downstairs to get a cup of hot water with a pinch of baking soda.

"Your father is not feeling at all well this morning," she called to Will as she passed by his room.

"He is n't? What's the matter?" and Will bounded out of bed.

Ganton & Co.

"He is sick at his stomach. I'm going after some soda and water. I wish you would go in and see him."

Without waiting to dress, Will hurried into his father's room. "What is it, father, what is the matter?" he asked, in a tone of such hearty sympathy that the old man was touched.

"It's nothing, Will, only my stomick's upset,—that's all; I'll be all right if I keep on my back a while."

Will sat down on the edge of the bed and looked at his father. He, too, could see the frightful ravages disease had made in the strong frame,—they were only too plain as the old man lay there so ill and so weak. He took one of the big, sallow, bony hands which lay upon the blanket in his own and pressed it affectionately; but nothing more was said. When his mother came up with the soda and water, Will returned to his own room and dressed slowly; this was the morning he had intended speaking about his engagement, but how could he do it so long as his father was so much worse?

Toward noon John Ganton felt better, so much better that to the surprise of the household he dressed and came downstairs. The feeling of nausea had gone, and with it the sharp pains, but there was a queer feeling in his side he could not describe, a feeling of fulness, a dull heaviness that was more of an ache than a pain. He could not refrain from passing his hand over his side from time to time while he was dressing and even after, to see if the swelling he had noticed was still there. No; he was not mistaken, it was there, now that he knew where to look. He could even feel it through his clothes, and wondered what it was, and how long it had been there. Yes; he would have to consult a doctor,—

Father and Son

unless he felt better; there was always the hope of getting well without calling a doctor. To his dislike of doctors was now added his dread of the surgeon; he knew they would want to cut into him, if only to find out what was the matter.

While he was reading the morning paper his mind kept wandering from the news to his condition; a half-column on the financial page devoted to rumors of more intimate relations between the International and the Union, "made necessary by the absorption of Borlan Bros. by Ganton & Co.," as the papers put it, diverted him for a moment from his own condition. "So they are getting together," he said to himself, and smiled grimly. "I thought they'd be stirred up some; maybe one of 'em will want to sell some of these days." For the moment he dropped the paper and reflected upon what would happen if Ganton & Co. bought up either of its two great competitors. There would n't be much left then in the way of competition in either buying or selling, and a very slight increase of prices would yield,—the figures ran into the millions, but he required no pencil and paper to arrive at results.

He knew the Union Company would really like to sell out; he knew Range Salter wanted to retire from business. "That comes from having a wife who wants to mix up in the fool world; it's the ruin of many a good business man; Salter's not half the man he used to be," he had often remarked to Browning.

A shooting pain reminded him of the place in his side. What if he should not get well? What if there should be something dangerous the matter with him? What would happen if — he did not like to think of dying, he would not

Ganton & Co.

think of it; he was not an old man, there were years of hard work in him yet.

His head sank forward on his breast. He looked so old and thin and yellow as he sat there lost in thought.

When Will entered the room a little later he found his father dozing, the papers in a heap on the floor. He aroused himself when he heard the door close and Will asked:

“How are you feeling, father?”

“Better — a good deal better. I guess I’ll be all right to-morrow.”

Will sat down near him and for a few moments nothing was said. John Ganton knew that Will was about to speak of his engagement, for there was something in the constraint of the young man’s manner which betrayed his purpose. The old man waited, his lips closing tightly together. It was time they had an understanding,— the thing had gone far enough.

“I wanted to speak to you about something, father, but —” and Will hesitated. “But I am afraid you are not feeling well enough —”

“Go on. I’m all right. What is it?” was the curt response.

Will could not recall just the words he had intended to use. He felt confused; and after shifting about in his chair, at length blurted out:

“Father, I’m engaged to be married.”

Without betraying the slightest surprise, John Ganton asked slowly, “Who’s the girl?”

“May Keating.” Will felt his heart thump as he watched his father anxiously. To his surprise there was no such outburst of anger as he expected.



"You remember what I said to you," his father repeated in harsher tones. "If you marry that girl I'll cut you off without a penny."

Father and Son

"So I've been told; so I've been told," the old man repeated. "Well, you remember what I said to you."

"But, father, you don't mean to say if I marry May Keating, you'll — you'll —"

Will could not utter the words hovering on his lips, for he really did not care so much for the money as he did about the breach with his father. He could not believe his father would be so vindictive, there being nothing of that element in his own nature.

"You remember what I said to you," his father repeated in harsher tones. "If you marry that girl I'll cut you off without a penny. I mean what I say. I don't propose to have any daughter of Jem Keating living on my money, so if you marry her you'll have to earn your own."

"But, father —"

"You need n't talk any more about it; you can make your own bed and lie on it. But if she makes such a fool of you as her sister has made of John Wilton, you may be sorry when it's too late."

Will's face flushed; he knew only too well what his father meant.

"There's a good deal of difference between May Keating and her sister," he answered hotly.

"About as much difference as between two peas in a pod; they're from the same worthless stock; there's not an honest hair in Jem Keating's head, and the girls are like him. They want you for your money. When they find out you won't get any, they'll drop you quick enough." The keen gray eyes looked at Will from beneath the bushy eyebrows as if to read the young man's thoughts.

Without stopping to think, Will said, "There's where you

Ganton & Co.

do her an injustice, father, for I have told her what you said, and she is willing to marry me anyway."

"So — so — she thinks I won't keep my word,— that after you 're married I 'll give in. Well, she 'll see — she 'll see." The tone was so bitter and relentless that Will felt saying anything more would only anger his father. He sat silent for some minutes, arose, and left the room.

CHAPTER XIX

MRS. JACK'S DINNER

THERE were thirty-two at the big dinner Mrs. Jack gave for her sister and Will Ganton. On this and similar occasions she supplemented her own household force by a chef from Kinsby's and with four men from the Club. One winter she had a chef of her own, a Frenchman who looked very stunning in his cap and apron. But he weighed nearly three hundred pounds, required so many assistants, consumed so much claret, made such rich sauces and such desperate love to all the maids, that she was obliged to discharge him,—to the great relief of John Wilton, who could not stand the "beastly tub," as he called the man. For the month after they lived on beefsteak and boiled potatoes cooked by Maggie, the laundress, who had served her time in the kitchen.

"A Frenchman may know how to cook snails," Wilton remarked, "but he frizzles the hide off a beefsteak, and as for plain ham and eggs, they look and taste as if they had come from a hair-dresser's."

Mrs. Jack was greatly disappointed; she had expected so much from the chef. He had worked for some of the best families in New York, so he said. Furthermore he had once cooked a dinner in Paris for King Edward when he was Prince of Wales, and in the habit of dining about a little more promiscuously,—not to mention lesser notabilities without end. Yet his first dinner in the Wilton mansion was a fail-

Ganton & Co.

ure, the *purée* was thick, cold, and pasty, the fish was drowned in an evil-smelling sauce which deterred all the guests except old Colonel Blowitt, who related how out West he once ate bronco-steak smothered in onions, and found it very palatable, and he insisted that down South during the war a puppy was a most excellent substitute for young pig. But then every one knew that nothing ever discouraged the gallant Colonel's appetite,—not even an unknown fish in a sea of doubtful sauce. The *entrée* was a mystery; the roast a cinder; the game scarce warmed through. When Mrs. Northwood King reached home after this dinner she exclaimed to her maid: "For goodness sakes, get me something to eat! I'm as hungry as a bear."

Other dinners were better, because Maggie, the laundress, helped; that is, she did the cooking to suit herself, while the fat chef sat in the centre of the kitchen and gave orders in broken English which no one understood or noticed.

After the one experience with the French chef, Mrs. Jack, like most of her acquaintances, relied upon the caterer for a cook when the occasion exceeded the capacity of her own household. As the caterer supplied not only the cook, but most of the things served, from soup to dessert, the custom led to a sameness in dinners so surprising that it caused a distinguished guest in the city to remark, after being entertained at several houses: "Chicago dinners are good, very good indeed; but they lack individuality. They all savor of the same kitchen."

As for butlers, footmen, waiters, and men to stand about in "elegant superfluity," as Slafter remarked, the Club was the never-failing source of supply. Many a visitor remarked upon the extraordinary resemblance between the servants

Mrs. Jack's Dinner

employed by different hosts, and the more discerning detected the identity at first glance. Wilton was always glad to have the men from the Club. It was his way of tipping them, for then he could give them what he pleased without infringing any club rule, and his liberality was not forgotten.

The great dining-room was brilliantly lighted, too brilliantly,—which was one of Mrs. Jack's failings. She thought candle-light was all well enough if supplemented by plenty of electricity. She covered her table with candlesticks because that was the thing to do, but a dazzling array of electric lights above quite overwhelmed the timid light below. May had often tried to persuade her sister to try only the candle-light, but the effort was in vain. "If you want to sit in the dark you can do so, but I like to see what I'm eating," Mrs. Jack replied, and ordered the man to turn on more light.

"One can't have too much light, May, with a French cook," Wilton remarked during the chef's regime, as he peered apprehensively into the dish before him.

Will Ganton sat at Mrs. Jack's right; J. Bosworth Walworth at her left. It was the first time the Walworths had dined with the Wiltons, though often invited. The Walworths were among the most exclusive people of the city, as became a man whose antecedents were wrapped in discreet obscurity. No one knew just who Walworth's father and grandfather were, and though Mrs. Bosworth Walworth talked more or less definitely of distinguished Massachusetts ancestry, the connecting links were shadowy and unsubstantial. There is a pride of obscurity as well as of race, of uncertain lineage as well as of certain; the luckless man socially is he whose father sits about in his shirt-sleeves and

Ganton & Co.

betrays signs of honest toil. The Walworth ancestors on both sides were not in evidence, hence the pride of their descendants.

The Walworths had no objection to Wilton, for his father had been an old resident and a man of wealth. But Mrs. Jack was the more than doubtful quantity. As "one of the Keating girls," she had no passport into exclusive circles; after her marriage and the building of the great house which so dwarfed the modest colonial house beside it, Mrs. Walworth called "in self-protection," for, as she explained to a sympathizing friend, "the young woman has a tongue."

Personally J. Bosworth was rather captivated by his fair neighbor, who understood so well how to flatter his vanity. He saw quite a little of her on the walk, and she was always so gracious that he could not help liking her. From time to time he had in an indirect way urged his wife to be a little more condescending and friendly. "They are our neighbors, you know, my dear," he said apologetically. "I can't help it if they are," Mrs. W. replied snappishly, "I don't propose to go out of my way to cultivate a woman who is the talk of the town." But in the end Mrs. Walworth was compelled to acknowledge that to be the talk of the town was in itself a species of distinction which commanded recognition.

J. Bosworth was not handsome,—one of the many obvious facts he did not recognize. He was short, stout, and pursy, with thin hair carefully parted in the middle from his forehead down the back of his head, and brushed forward over his ears to meet his reddish side-whiskers, which stood out from his cheeks as straight as he could train them,—“after the manner of the old school,” he persuaded himself. Like most short men, he eked out his stature by a pomposity

Mrs. Jack's Dinner

which did not fail to impress. His one weakness was a pretty face,—he could not help it. In the presence of a pretty woman he invariably gave the reddish side-whiskers an extra twist to make them flare still more. Unhappily for him, this habit was so fixed that his wife could tell from the angle of the whiskers what he had been doing and saying, — not that J. Bosworth ever exceeded the bounds of friendly intercourse, but he had so many enthusiasms they bored his wife. He urged her to call on every pretty newcomer who smiled on him, and he sometimes carried his point, as in the case of Mrs. Jack.

J. Bosworth posed as a patron of the fine arts, and of things æsthetic and intellectual in general. He was one of the governing members of the Institute for Fine Arts, an officer of the Historical Society, a trustee of the University, a supporter of the Ruskin Settlement, and prominently identified with many other public and charitable organizations of various kinds,— not that he, himself, gave liberally to the several causes, but he made a good figurehead, and generously solicited his friends to give.

On the whole, J. Bosworth was a credit to the city, “a gentleman of the old school,” in the admiring eyes of the rawer social products about him. As he sat by Mrs. Jack and drank in the flattery which flowed in ample stream from her plump red lips, his round face beamed and his whiskers stood out in sharp points on each side of his blooming cheeks; from the far end of the great oval table Mrs. Walworth could see these signs of naive delight, and rightly interpreted their meaning.

“Your wife has quite fascinated my husband,” she remarked dryly to Wilton.

Ganton & Co.

"Gad, when she sets out to she can fascinate any man."

"Oh!" was Mrs. Walworth's only response.

"So you like my poor little house?" Mrs. Jack looked so sweetly at J. Bosworth that he could do no less than reply:

"It is charming, Mrs. Wilton, perfectly charming. It exhibits such — such extraordinary taste,— such — such —" He could get no further; his æsthetic conscience began to smite him, and smite him hard.

"I am so glad; praise from you —" Mrs. Jack laid the stress of her eyes upon the "you" — "means so much. You are such an authority that, do you know, I was almost afraid to build my house next to yours."

Down deep in his heart J. Bosworth wished she had not, but with his lips he expressed the disappointment he would have felt had she built elsewhere.

"Your house is such a dear," Mrs. Jack went on enthusiastically. "Everybody says our two houses just set each other off to the best advantage."

J. Bosworth discreetly avoided assenting to that proposition.

Despite Mrs. Jack's best efforts, there were moments when the dinner dragged. May Keating exerted herself to be agreeable, but the effort was too obvious; and it was not until he had drunk several glasses of champagne that Will Ganton was able to reply in other than monosyllables.

John Wilton was never very bright at a dinner. He had long been voted just a little heavy, and hostesses always had trouble in placing him, but on this occasion his sympathies were so enlisted that he aroused himself and fairly shone — for him. He proposed the health of Will, and of May, and

Mrs. Jack's Dinner

of nearly every one at the table at inopportune moments, and by dint of much champagne, supplemented by not a little whiskey and water for those who did not drink wine, he kept his end of the table fairly lively. Notwithstanding all these efforts, there were lapses which were depressing, and everybody was glad when the end came and the ladies retired.

As the men drew their chairs about one end of the table and lighted their cigars, George Axford shook Will Ganton's hand cordially, exclaiming: "Will, old man, I congratulate you. You are a lucky fellow."

"Many thanks, Axford. Why don't you follow my example?"

"Can't afford it. A wife is an expensive luxury, nowadays."

Axford was rich, but, as his friends well knew, he was not inclined to spend money on any one but himself.

"You can afford it better than I," Will laughed as he accepted the small glass of cognac the butler offered him.

"If I had an interest in Ganton & Co., I might afford a dozen wives. As it is I have all I can do to feed and clothe myself."

"That's all right, but I may be borrowing of you yet, old fellow." The sudden change in Will's voice and manner did not escape his friend, and Axford was sorry he had mentioned Ganton & Co. The words had slipped out before he thought, and, as the chance expression invariably does, they had betrayed the thought uppermost in the minds of all present that evening. He dropped the subject and tried to talk of other things.

The men moved their chairs about until the party was split up into twos and threes, each group talking of what

Ganton & Co.

most interested them, mainly business or politics; now and then loud laughter followed a funny story, which was repeated for the benefit of others. The conversation was animated. However stupid and hopeless during a dinner, the American business man shines so soon as the ladies disappear. If he can not talk to them, he can talk with his fellow-kind and talk well.

By the irresistible attraction of repulsion, Wilton found himself and Delaney chatting quite apart from the others. He did not like Delaney, and the latter knew it; hence the two were more than ordinarily cordial when they met, as if each unconsciously felt the necessity of keeping up an appearance of friendship to blind the eyes of the curious. This was not difficult for Delaney, he had no trouble in dissembling; besides, he was not the offended party — and that makes a difference. Wilton always felt embarrassed when the other was about, and his embarrassment showed plainly in the effort he made to appear at ease. It went against the grain of his blunt and straightforward nature to pretend what he did not feel. He therefore did his best to keep up the conversation without touching the one subject he wanted to speak about; he would have given anything to be able to talk right out, to tell Delaney what he thought of him, and then kick him out of the house. But he knew that would never do. He had to consider not only his wife, but their boy,— if it were not for Major he would make a scene, yes, he knew he should. These ideas were passing through his mind, even as he sat there talking as calmly as if he liked the man. How he detested those thin, clean-cut features! The droop of the mustache annoyed him, for the fellow was handsome, no mistake about that, and small wonder

Mrs. Jack's Dinner

women raved over him. He looked cynical enough to doubt the existence of any virtue in man or woman, and Wilton could not help recalling some of the ugly stories he had heard, stories of all sorts of entanglements and rumors of irregularities in business transactions, which, if proved, would ostracize the man from the clubs and more than likely land him in jail. He was capable of anything, not much question about that; still he must have his good qualities, for May said he had, and she knew. During a pause in their conversation, for lack of something better to say, he asked idly:

"What 's doing in the market, anything?"

"Nothing, the public are out of it. Only professional trading, and that does not come my way." Delaney spoke in a tone of indifference, but as a matter of fact he had not been so reduced financially in a long time. His few customers were out of the market entirely; if something did not turn up before long he would be at the end of his resources.

What prompted him to do it Wilton could not for the life of him tell, for certainly there was no reason, rather the contrary, why he should help Lawrence Delaney; but yielding to a sudden impulse he said:

"I never speculate myself, but I can give you a pointer which may be useful; Union Copper will resume dividends at the next meeting of the board."

Wilton was a large stockholder and an influential director in Union Copper; interests he inherited had been taken into the great consolidation of mining properties, and it was about the only company in the management of which he actively participated. Delaney knew all this, and furthermore he knew that if dividends were to be resumed in the

Ganton & Co.

near future it meant an advance of at least twenty points in the stock.

"May I rely upon that?" he asked earnestly. "You know I have mighty little to lose."

"Such is the present intention," Wilton answered dryly, sorry he had mentioned the matter. "I have steadily opposed dividends, but the company is now in a position to resume."

That settled it, for it had been a matter of common knowledge in the Street that for more than a year the Wilton crowd on the board of directors had steadfastly opposed the payment of dividends until the company should accumulate a surplus sufficient to meet every possible requirement.

The next day Delaney began buying Union Copper, putting up as margins not only the little money he had, but every cent he could borrow. As the stock steadily advanced it was not difficult for him to secure additional credit with his bank and brokers, since every purchase showed a profit. He kept the information he had received to himself. What was the use of bulling the market when he was trying to buy the stock on his own account?

After the great dinner was over and the last guest out of the house, Mrs. Jack went to her sister's room and dropped into a chair with a sigh of relief.

"There, it's over, and now we are in for it, and no mistake. I hope you won't be sorry." Mrs. Jack's tone plainly showed that she felt quite sure her sister would be sorry; she did not like the situation at all, and she did not like the manner in which their friends accepted it; she felt for once in her life she had made a mess of it.

May made no reply. She was too accustomed to Mrs. Jack's moods to pay much attention to them.

Mrs. Jack's Dinner

"Why don't you say something?" Mrs. Jack asked crossly.

"What is there to say? It is all over, and, as you say, we are in for it. Let us at least make the best of it."

"That Carrie Trelway, how I detest her!" exclaimed Mrs. Jack, with sudden recollection of past injuries.

"I thought she and Larry were the life of the dinner."

"She thinks she can monopolize the conversation wherever she is."

"It was fortunate for us she did this evening."

"Why did n't you keep up your end better? That old cat, Mrs. J. Bosworth Walworth, was taking everything in."

Down deep in her heart Mrs. Jack was immensely delighted over the Walworths' acceptance of her invitation, but at the same time she did not like Mrs. J. Bosworth one little bit, and she knew Mrs. J. Bosworth did not like her.

For a long time Mrs. Jack sat there commenting upon the dinner and her guests so keenly that frequently May could not refrain from smiling. Mrs. Jack did have a tongue, there was no doubt about it. With unerring precision she could hit the weak spots in the social or private armor of her acquaintances. When she had exhausted the failings of her guests her mind veered about to the one subject that worried her:

"I'd like to know how you and Will Ganton are going to live if that old brute cuts him off."

"Will has his salary and an interest in the company. We shall get along."

"That's a fine prospect for a girl like you, May Keating," Mrs. Jack said scornfully. She could not understand how her sister accepted the situation so calmly.

Ganton & Co.

"I am satisfied."

"No; you are not satisfied, and what is the use of saying so? You are just throwing yourself away, you know you are; you don't love him."

"There, Sally," May interrupted firmly, "we will talk no more about it. Whether I love Will Ganton or not, I am going to marry him. I like him as well as I shall ever like any man." She began quietly gathering up her things, which were scattered about the room, and putting them in the closet. Mrs. Jack sat silent a moment, then jumped up and impulsively threw her arms about her sister's neck. "Forgive me, dearie, I did not mean it, but — but I do want you to be happy, and — and —"

"There, Sally, never mind," and May kissed her sister affectionately. "It is all right; I am happy, happier than I have been for a long time. I feel I am doing the decent thing, anyway."

CHAPTER XX

A STRAIGHT TIP

JOHAN GANTON read in the papers all about Mrs. Jack's big dinner and the formal acknowledgment of the engagement; his square jaws set firmly together and the ugly look came into his eyes, but he said not a word. His wife knew there was a storm brewing, and she fluttered about the house anxiously, afraid to speak. Will rather avoided his father, but when they did meet they talked of business and conditions at the Yards, each trying to avoid the subject uppermost in his mind.

For some days John Ganton had felt so much better that he was greatly encouraged; to be sure, the dull feeling in his side, the sensation of fulness with occasional shooting pains, never left him, and there was always the swelling, which he could now see quite plainly just below the ribs. It did not grow smaller, but he persuaded himself it did not increase in size. Night and morning he carefully examined this strange lump, looking at it and feeling of it carefully and tenderly, and wondering what it could be.

"It must be a strain," he said to himself; "that is what it is, and it will go away after a while." But it did not go away, and he knew it was no strain, for he had never had anything like it before, and it did not feel like the soreness of a strain or of a bruise, or anything he had ever experienced, — it was more like a hard place, some sort of a large lump inside. He knew that people had tumors and growths which

Ganton & Co.

had to be cut out, but he fought against the very notion of anything of the kind. Notwithstanding the fact that he felt better, still there were days when he could not remain down town more than an hour or two; it tired him so he was unfitted for business.

"I guess I'm growing old," he remarked apologetically to Browning; "I can't stand as much as I used to." But neither Browning nor any one else in the office was deceived by his efforts to disguise his condition; they all knew he was a sick man, and from week to week, almost from day to day, they could see the change for the worse. There were days when he looked so haggard and seemed to suffer so much they all wondered at his coming down at all.

John Ganton was not unpopular with his employees; on the contrary, they entertained for him a singular sort of regard and loyalty, the regard and respect men of lesser ability have for one of commanding force and indefatigable energy. They followed him as soldiers follow a stern, tyrannical, but successful general; they were the rank and file of the most powerful industrial organization in the world, and they participated in its prestige; he was something more than their employer, he was their leader. In his way he was kind to those about him, exacting to the last degree. Every one had to work, and work hard, and he did not believe in large salaries. "Many a good man is spoiled by too much pay," he often said. "The man who works for money is n't worth having," was another of his maxims. To men who applied to him direct he usually said, "If you want to work for Ganton & Co. take off your coat; if you want to work for wages go elsewhere."

It was not that he cared so much for money but he

A Straight Tip

honestly believed high salaries meant less work, and that men did better if they had to work hard to make both ends meet; such had been his own experience. That a railroad president should be paid fifty thousand dollars a year seemed to him folly run mad, and he had never taken for himself fifty thousand dollars a year out of his own business. "Pretty soon," he said, "those fellows won't have time to do anything but draw their pay and ride around in private cars."

Like so many American business men, his passion was the making of money, not the hoarding or the spending. He took a certain satisfaction in reading references to him as one of the very rich men of the country, as a multi-millionaire, but every dollar he had was invested. His credit was well-nigh unlimited, but he had very little ready money, and what he had belonged to his business, his personal account at the bank seldom showing more than a few thousand dollars.

"Why, look here, I have no money," he once said impatiently to a committee soliciting a subscription for an object which did not appeal to him, when the spokesman suggested that with his great wealth he ought to make a liberal contribution. "People seem to think I have money to do what I like with. I have no money," he repeated; "all the money I have belongs to my business. You talk about my being worth millions; suppose I should draw out those millions as if I owned them, what would happen? Ganton & Co. would close its doors, thousands of men would be thrown out of work, people all over the world who look to us for food and meat would go hungry. You think a man is rich because he has a great business, but I want to tell you the man and all he has belong to the business."

Ganton & Co.

Every dollar I draw out comes from the business, and others are affected; every dollar I leave in does good to more people than it would if spent by you." To another soliciting committee he once said: "Why do you come to me? I'm not rich; why don't you go to the men who live on their rents and on the interest from their investments? They have money to burn,—their money is their own to do with as they please; my money is tied up in my business, every cent of it; and most of the time I owe the banks."

None the less, he gave a good deal in his own way; people who knew him best did not ask him for money, but would make known the merits and needs of the institutions in which they were interested and leave the matter without solicitation, and perhaps a month or a year later he would send a check, usually for a generous amount.

Since reading the account of Mrs. Jack's dinner, John Ganton every Sunday morning hunted through the papers until he found the page devoted to society news, and searched these columns of small chronicles, tittle-tattle, and gossip for any mention of Will's name in connection with the Wiltons and May Keating; in this way he kept track of what the boy was doing. He had never before read the society news,—according to his notions only fools could be interested in that sort of notoriety,—but now this endless stream of personal mention gave him information he could get nowhere else. He learned of the luncheons given for May Keating, and the dinners given for her and Will, how often they were entertained at the clubs, and who made up the parties. Some of the men mentioned he knew personally or by reputation, but the women he did not know at all, as they belonged to a world he had never entered. Their amusements were

A Straight Tip

as strange and foolish to him as performances on the stage. How people could waste their time in such ridiculous fashion he could not understand: the same people, the same names, the same dinners, the same guests, the same clubs, the same places, the same endless monotony of social life,—it made him tired to read it, and only the desire to know what Will was doing spurred him on. At last, one Sunday morning, he read the following paragraph:

“It is rumored the wedding of Miss May Keating to Mr. Will Ganton will take place in December.”

The old man read and reread the item, cut it out, and put it in his pocket. All that day he was restless, uneasy, and irascible, shuffling about the house in his worn old slippers.

“What is the matter, John? Do you feel worse?” his anxious little wife inquired several times. At last he responded angrily:

“Don’t keep asking me that. I’m all right.”

She relapsed into silence, but she could see something worried him. With a mother’s intuition, she feared it was something about Will.

The next morning he sent word for Will to meet him in the library after breakfast.

The old man dressed slowly. He had had his breakfast brought to his room, but he was not hungry. Still, he drank half a cup of coffee and tried to eat a piece of the toast which his wife with her own hands had made and buttered for him; but the feeling of nausea had come back mornings. He could not account for it, but he thought it might be caused by Doc Ruggles’s mixture, therefore he stopped taking it.

Ganton & Co.

He rested a few moments before going downstairs, and the feeling of nausea passed away. When he entered the room Will was standing by the windows looking out upon the street, where a small boy and a little girl were playing as contentedly as if life were one long day of sunshine. As he heard his father enter, Will turned and asked affectionately:

“Well, father, how are you feeling this morning?”

Without answering, the old man sank down in his leather-covered chair near the table, fumbling in the pocket of his waistcoat until he found the newspaper clipping. He held it out to his son.

“Is that true?” he asked.

Will read the few lines of print, hesitated a moment, and replied firmly:

“Yes, it is, father,—that is, we are to be married before the holidays. I had intended telling you; I hoped —”

“That’s enough,” the old man interrupted. “That’s enough,” he repeated slowly; “all I wanted to know was whether it’s true or not. So you have made up your mind?”

“Yes, I have.” There was no accent of doubt or indecision in the answer; it was final, and John Ganton knew it.

“Very well,” he said, “you remember what I told you.”

Will made no reply, and his silence angered his father.

“You remember what I told you,” he repeated sharply; “you can shift for yourself if you marry that girl.”

Will knew it would only add fuel to the flame if he attempted to plead or argue; there was no use saying a word; for several moments his father glared at him, then he continued relentlessly:

“You will need some money to get married.”

A Straight Tip

Will looked at his father in surprise. "I—I can get along, father," he stammered. "I have some —"

"You have n't a cent in the world," the old man interrupted grimly; "you are overdrawn at the bank and your salary is paid ahead over a month."

"But I shall make all that good before the wedding. I have had to use a good deal of money lately."

"In entertaining worthless people,—I know, I know. I have read of your doings at the clubs and about town, but you have come to the end of your tether, and you have n't a cent of money. What are you going to do about it?"

Will could say nothing. It was all true. He had drawn his salary ahead and was overdrawn at the bank; he had spent money freely, as was his habit, without much thought of the future. The truth was, he believed all along that when the time came his father would give in,—it did not seem possible that he could be in earnest.

A disagreeably hard expression played about the haggard features of the old man as he noted his son's embarrassment, then he went on in the same relentless tone:

"All you have in the world is the stock in Ganton & Co. that I gave you three years ago. You can't sell that to anybody but me; when you're ready to sell I'm ready to buy."

"Father, you don't mean to say you want me to give up all interest in the business, do you?" There was a pathetic ring to the appeal, which would have moved any one but John Ganton. Apparently he did not hear it, for he merely repeated:

"When you're ready to sell I'm ready to buy."

Ganton & Co.

Will looked at his father a moment, and without a word left the room.

That afternoon John Ganton was seized with such pain that he had his wife telephone Browning to come to the house and bring his physician.

When they came they found the old man on the couch in the library. He would not go to bed, for he was afraid that if he undressed the doctor would insist on an examination and discover the swelling in his side.

He described his sensations vaguely as pains in his side and cramps in his stomach, indicating the locality by passing his hand across his stomach from side to side in such a manner the doctor was puzzled.

"There is something wrong with your liver, Mr. Ganton. There can be no doubt about it. Your skin shows it."

"That's just what Doc Ruggles said," the old man commented; "he said it was my liver."

"If I could make an examination —" the doctor suggested.

"There's no need of it," the old man interrupted hurriedly. "I guess it's my liver. Can't you give me some medicine that will stop these pains?"

"I can quiet the pains, but it will do you no good in the long run, Mr. Ganton; it will be necessary for you to submit to an examination sooner or later, and I should advise it immediately."

"No; you just give me something to stop these pains, and I will be all right in a day or two."

The doctor could see the old man's mind was absolutely fixed against anything like a thorough examination, and that for some reason he feared it; therefore there was nothing to

A Straight Tip

do except administer a sedative, just sufficient to allay the pains. Accordingly he left some small white tablets, with directions how and when they were to be taken. "But these will only relieve you for the time being, Mr. Ganton; they will not cure you."

"That's all right. If I can get the better of these pains I'll get along first rate," the old man replied confidently.

As they left the house the doctor said to Browning:

"I am afraid there is something very serious the matter with his liver. He ought to submit to a thorough examination at once. Under the influence of sedatives he may feel better for a short time, but it won't last."

The prediction came true. For a week or so John Ganton felt much better. Each night he took one of the little white tablets, and it deadened the pain so that he slept better than he had for months. The feeling of nausea troubled him mornings, and he had so little appetite that he had to force himself to eat; but all this he did not mind so long as the sharp pains were reduced to a dull ache, which was often little more than a sensation of fulness in his side. He was sorry he had not called in the doctor earlier and gotten the little white tablets which acted so like magic.

During these days of temporary relief the great business of Ganton & Co. absorbed all his attention; it seemed to grow and expand in spite of him, like some huge devouring monster that gathered strength with every bound and swept on in uncontrollable might and energy.

It was with surprise that he noted the increase in the company's English business; the Liverpool office had accomplished wonders in extending trade, not only throughout

Ganton & Co.

Great Britain, but to the colonies. MacMasters wrote it was all due to the efforts of John, that the young man had a "wonderful head on his shoulders," and much more to the same effect. This pleased the old man, though he did not quite believe it all; he did not see how it was possible for such a bookworm to develop such qualities. However, the growth of the business was substantial evidence in his favor.

Not until this last interview with his father did Will Ganton fully realize that in the future he would have to depend upon his salary and the dividends upon the stock he held in Ganton & Co. By spending less recklessly he could get along, but he owed quite a little money here and there, and these debts must be paid before he could think of marrying.

It cut him to the quick when his father offered to buy his stock, to drop him out of the business entirely. He felt so sure that, once married, May would win his father over, that he would not think of selling his stock or severing his connection with the company. May could do anything with people about her,—she was so clever, and he had the blind faith in her which the clever woman always inspires. But he must make a little money in some way; naturally his mind turned toward speculation. He lived in an atmosphere of speculation; his father was the most powerful factor on the Board of Trade, and hardly a day passed that the financial columns did not contain reports of the activity of Ganton & Co. in wheat or corn or pork. It was a part of their great business to control the supply and prices of grain and food products; their representative was always on the floor, and every big firm of brokers did business for them.

Will had not speculated since his last disastrous venture;

A Straight Tip

he had steadfastly refused to take even a small flyer, but now, under the pressure of necessity, he dropped into Delaney's office about four o'clock one afternoon, just to see what was going on. He found Delaney checking up some figures on a sheet of paper.

"Anything doing in the market, Larry?" he asked as he seated himself.

"Not much. Rails are slow, but there have been good advances in some of the industrials lately."

"Do you know of any sure thing?"

Delaney hesitated, looked at Will, and said:

"Why do you ask? I thought you were out of the market for good."

"Oh, so I am, but I would n't mind making a little money on a sure thing."

"There are not many sure things nowadays," Delaney answered dryly.

"That may be, but sometimes you fellows get pretty reliable tips. The fact is, Larry, I would like to make some money,— I need a few thousand pretty badly."

Delaney thought for a moment; he had not told any one about Union Copper, and he had not intended telling any one. But there was really no reason why he should not let Will in; he had bought all the stock he could carry, and already there had been a substantial advance; in fact, he was figuring up how much he stood to win as Will entered the office. The stock closed that day eighty-two bid; he had begun buying at sixty-nine; if the company resumed dividends at the next directors' meeting the stock would go to par sure.

"I can give you a pointer, but you must keep it quiet,"

Ganton & Co.

he said at last. Without mentioning Wilton's name, he told what he knew about Union Copper, and called Will's attention to the recent rapid advance in the stock.

"If you are sure about the dividend I will go in," Will said, after considering the figures Delaney laid before him.

"My tip is from an insider who knows," Delaney answered positively.

"Then go ahead and buy a thousand shares for me. I will arrange for the margin. I may take on more; it looks safe."

"As safe as anything can be. The company is sound, and the stock will sell high when on a dividend basis."

The stock continued to advance, and Will bought all told some three thousand shares at from eight-two to ninety; to put up margins he was compelled to borrow money; as the son of John Ganton his credit was good, and he had little difficulty. He felt so sure of making from ten to twenty points on the stock that he no longer worried over the immediate future; within two weeks the stock he had bought showed a profit of over twenty thousand dollars, but neither he nor Delaney sold any. The declaration of a dividend would send the stock away above par, so both bought a little more, Delaney in his confidence going so far as to pledge some securities that did not belong to him.

Larry Delaney felt he owed this lucky stroke entirely to the generosity of John Wilton, and he determined to show his appreciation by keeping away from Mrs. Jack; it was the least he could do in the circumstances. He knew they were talked about altogether too freely for the good name of any woman, though that mattered little to him. He had always been food for gossip, and it was part of the atmosphere in which he lived, part of his fame, his notoriety, his

A Straight Tip

social stock in trade; women were attracted toward him because to know him implied a certain risk, a certain dare-devil recklessness of consequences; there was a hazard in his mere acquaintance, while his friendship was positively compromising.

For several weeks after receiving from John Wilton the tip about Union Copper, Delaney did not go near Mrs. Jack; he did not call at the house, and declined all invitations. Mrs. Jack wrote many little notes on the paper with the faint perfume he knew so well, and she telephoned again and again; but he pleaded important engagements and was obdurate. He had made up his mind to do the decent thing and gradually cut loose. He had meant to do so once or twice before on May's account,—in fact, he had said to May he was going to see less of them, and she knew what he meant; but somehow things had drifted along, and he never carried his better purposes into effect. There were times while playing with the Major—he liked the Major better than any one in the world—when his conscience rallied and smote him, and he looked into the big blue eyes of the little fellow, and thought to himself: “Major, this won't do. You and I are friends,—great chums; you love me and I love you, and yet all the time I am hurting you behind your back. I am doing something that will make you feel bad when you grow up if you hear people talk, and you won't like me any more; you will hate me. No, Major, it won't do, so I will just pull up.” But he did n't pull up until he felt the sense of obligation toward Wilton; he could not accept a favor from a man and repay it with injury.

Mrs. Jack was piqued; she did not know what to make of this sudden change.

Ganton & Co.

"Where's Larry nowadays?" May asked one day, suddenly recalling the fact he had not been around for two weeks or more.

"I don't know, and I don't care," her sister snapped out in a manner that showed, while she might not know, she did care very much.

May said nothing more, but wondered if there had been a quarrel.

When Will Ganton asked Delaney where he was keeping himself, the latter replied:

"Work, my dear fellow, work. I can't afford the social racket all the time." Even Will was not so dense as to believe that.

Delaney did turn up one afternoon at a reception at the Northwood Kings'; on catching sight of him Carrie Trelway called out loud enough for several who were near by to hear:

"Where's Mrs. Jack? She has been looking for you everywhere for a month."

Everybody smiled, and Delaney himself flushed slightly, — the hit was too palpable. For once he had no adequate reply at his tongue's end.

"You scored that time, Carrie," said one of her friends admiringly.

"Sorry I said it now," Carrie Trelway remarked in a low voice, as Delaney turned and walked away without a word.

He had come early hoping to get away before Mrs. Jack arrived, but fate willed otherwise; she came in just as he was edging his way out. The moment she saw him, she beckoned to him imperiously, and withdrawing to one corner of the large hall she asked quickly:

"Why have you not been to see me lately? What have

A Straight Tip

you been doing? What is the matter?" All the time her clear blue eyes were fixed so steadfastly on his that he felt confused, and hardly knew what to reply.

"I — I have been busy," he stammered.

"No; you have not. That is not the reason; I want to know." Her voice rose, and he looked around apprehensively, lest some one should overhear them. At a little distance he could see the group of which Carrie Trelway was the centre eying them curiously.

"This is no place to talk," he said hurriedly.

"Then wait a few moments until I can get away and I will take you for a drive."

He knew it was useless to plead any excuse, as he had none; they had driven away together from too many similar affairs for him to decline now. Contrary to his usual manner, he remained in the corner by himself while Mrs. Jack fluttered about the reception-room in such high spirits as to attract comment. "The prodigal has returned," remarked Carrie Trelway.

"Have you seen Mr. Delaney? He was here just a moment ago, and I am sure he was looking for you," Mrs. Northwood King said with anxious hospitality, quite unconscious of any possible irony.

Mrs. Jack murmured something in reply. She resented the interest people seemed to be taking in her affairs. As soon as she could decently do so, she made her way to the hall, ordered her carriage, and she and Delaney went out, leaving a buzz of comment behind.

Once in the brougham, Mrs. Jack turned to him and said, with the emphasis of a woman who feels she has the right to know, "Now tell me why you have not been to see me lately."

Ganton & Co.

Delaney had been thinking all the time he waited, and had made up his mind to speak plainly. He saw that subterfuge would be idle, and only exasperate the more.

"There's no use. This thing can't go on. Jack has done me a great favor lately. He helped me out of a bad hole. He is a royal good fellow, and the least I can do is to — to —" he hesitated.

"Thank you; you need n't say it. I understand," she put in so calmly that he was surprised at her self-control. "Men have queer notions of loyalty; pray what has Jack done to work this change?"

"Oh, not much; only a tip on the market, but it came when I needed it badly."

"Only a tip on the market! I thought so," she exclaimed scornfully; "and that is a man's notion of loyalty — to drop a woman for a tip on the stock-market."

He winced because he could not help it. There was a measure of truth in what she said, but she did not understand.

"It is not the money,—that is not it; but it is the fact that he did me a kindness in his off-hand, generous way when there was no need of his doing it. He does not like me, and I know it; yet because I happened to say I was pretty hard pressed he helped me out,—even a dog will show gratitude for favors received," he argued.

"How much money do you make by dropping me?" The words came deliberately, but he knew she was filled with rage she could hardly suppress.

"That's not a fair way of putting it," he answered irritably. "I told you I don't care anything about the money."

"It's a lie," she burst out, losing all self-control. "It's

A Straight Tip

a lie; you do! You know you do. All you care for is money. I should like to know my price. If you have sold me for less than — than a million you're a brute!" She collapsed into tears. There was something so ridiculous in what she said that he could not help laughing, and in the midst of her tears she laughed too; the strain was over; he took her little gloved hand in both of his and said:

"Look here, I want you to help me. I am trying to do the right thing for once in my life."

"That is all right," she sobbed; "but there is no need of doing it at my expense. . . . You will come and see me, won't you?"

"Why, yes; of course I will, but not so often. Let us be more prudent, let us —"

"You will come and see me to-morrow, won't you?"

She said it so pleadingly that he could not find it in his heart to say no, much as he honestly wished to.

"Yes — perhaps — I will see — would it not —"

"To-morrow at five," she murmured.

He yielded like an exhausted swimmer struggling against a stiff current, but he firmly determined that if he called the next day he should not go again for a good long time. He intended to adhere to his original purpose, though he could now see it might be necessary to break gradually, if he would avoid unpleasant scenes.

Mrs. Jack nestled closer beside him. It was dark in the park, and the rays of the high electric lights scarce penetrated the interior of the small brougham as they drove on north. Not a soul could see them; the two perfectly trained men on the box kept their eyes fixed ahead,— the whims of their mistress were not their business. Mrs. Jack lifted her tear-wet

Ganton & Co.

cheek toward Delaney. "Kiss me," she murmured softly. He drew back a little; he felt that if he yielded all his good resolutions would go for naught, and he must draw the line somewhere.

At that moment a large swiftly moving automobile with its great double headlights swept suddenly around a turn, and for the fraction of a second the interior of the brougham was as light as day. Startled, Mrs. Jack drew back to her own side, and Delaney shrank into his corner. The automobile was gone like a flash, and they were so blinded by the sudden glare they could see nothing.

For a moment they sat silent; then Mrs. Jack exclaimed nervously:

'Do you suppose they could see in?'

"I don't see how they could help it; they were right on us with those infernal lights." Delaney felt all the irritation of a man caught in a compromising situation at a moment when he was trying his best to resist temptation.

"Well, it was probably some one we do not know." Mrs. Jack was arguing herself out of her fright.

"They might know us, however. . . . I think you better tell the men to drive back."

On the return they exchanged barely a word, and both were oppressed with a vague feeling of apprehension. Delaney was angry with himself to think he had come at all, Mrs. Jack felt the humiliation of a woman whose advances are repulsed. He was dropped at North Avenue, and she went directly home.

John Wilton was not only in the automobile; he was on the front seat with the chauffeur. As the machine swept

A Straight Tip

around the turn he recognized the horses and brougham as his, and by the glare of the acetylene lamps he caught a glimpse of his wife and Delaney. Then all was dark as the big automobile passed like a flash; but that one glimpse was more than sufficient.

For the moment a sickening feeling of depression came over him. The anonymous letter, what the French maid had said, the brutal remark of old John Ganton, his own suspicions, — all came back to him. He had never believed his wife was more than impulsive, wilful, and imprudent; he had never believed she would do anything wrong, thinking she had too much sense, if not too much pride, for that. She merely loved notoriety, — that was her weakness. He had persuaded himself that she kept Delaney at her heels simply to make people talk, and he had never believed there could be anything wrong; but now, with his own eyes he had seen them together, driving at nightfall through the shadows of the park; he had seen them side by side like two lovers, her hand in his, her face turned up to his. He wondered if the chauffeur beside him, if his two friends in the tonneau, recognized who were in the brougham. The fear lest they had overwhelmed him with shame. How could they help seeing what he saw? The machine was right on the carriage, so close that only by a sharp turn and skilful driving had the chauffeur avoided a collision. The man may have been so occupied that he had no time to look at the occupants of the brougham, but his friends must have seen everything almost as plainly as he did, the light was so bright. To be sure they were in the tonneau, and there was a bare possibility that he and the chauffeur cut off their view. But no; that was ridicu-

Ganton & Co.

lous,—the sharp swerve made by the machine gave them the same unobstructed view,—they must have seen!

All the way down the Drive, through Rush Street, and over the bridge, he was turning over in his mind the question whether the others saw or not, his sudden feeling of depression giving way to one of apprehension. Not a word had been said since they passed the carriage, and he did not like that; if they had not recognized his wife they would have gone on talking. Just before entering the park they had all been talking about something,—he could not remember what, but they were talking loudly and laughing. They had had a delightful run to Fort Sheridan and back, barely escaping arrest in Glencoe for exceeding the speed limit. From the moment of meeting the carriage not a word had been said. As they slowed up at the bridge, he half turned in his seat to say something to break a silence that seemed to him so ominously oppressive, but he could think of nothing to say. He even thought his two friends avoided seeing him, for one looked down the river and the other turned his head and looked back up the street; it was probably all in his imagination, but it certainly did seem as though they wished to avoid speaking.

When they dropped him at the Club, he muttered something about dining down town. They made no comment, neither did they suggest getting out for a drink, seeming to take it for granted he would prefer to be left alone; of course they knew.

There was no one in the big reading-room except two men who roomed at the Club; they were buried in the evening papers, and did not look up as Wilton entered. He passed into the deserted *café*; ordered a whiskey and soda,

A Straight Tip

drank it, and ordered another. After drinking three in succession, he felt a little better. The glow of the alcohol mounted to his brain, and as the weight of fear and depression lifted, he began to think he was a fool to get in such a state of fright over what his friends might have seen, persuading himself that his own eyes might have deceived him, that it was all so sudden his imagination had distorted the scene. His wife would not do anything wrong. Delaney — the thought of Delaney filled his heart with rage. How he detested the man, with his handsome face, his cool, cynical ways. Who was he? What was he? No one knew; an adventurer, a blackleg, his outspoken enemies said,— but not to his face.

At the thought of Delaney, Wilton ordered another whiskey and soda. The smooth-faced waiter looked at him in surprise; he had never known Wilton to drink four whiskeys in rapid succession. Long experience within the narrow limits of club-life had made him quick to observe, and he knew what and how much the different members drank. When any man drank more than usual, nine times out of ten he could guess the reason, taking the same kind of pride in this special discernment that the boy in the coat-room took in remembering to whom each hat belonged. The waiter knew that something troubled Wilton; it was plain from his manner as well as from the number of whiskeys he ordered. It was not business, for it was not the hour of day for business worry. It was not losses at play, for Wilton never worried over them. Besides, he drove up in an automobile and came in alone. There must be a woman in the case,— a man always drank more recklessly when there was a woman in the case. "If it were only business a

Ganton & Co.

man would drink to cheer himself up, but a woman,— that was different; then he drank in an ugly, desperate mood and for forgetfulness.

The smug-faced waiter felt sure it was a woman, but whether Wilton's wife or some one else's it was not so easy to tell. From club gossip he made up his mind it was Mrs. Jack. He had never heard Wilton's name mixed up with that of any other woman; so, with the petty curiosity of a man whose life is bounded by the four walls of a *café*, he watched Wilton as he sat there leaning forward with one elbow on the small table.

He sat there for half an hour or more, then he ordered something to eat, the nip of the alcohol making him hungry. He had begun to forget his wife a little, his mind wandering to other things. He was not intoxicated, for it took more than four whiskeys to intoxicate him; but on an empty stomach they were very potent.

When the boy announced that his dinner was served, he went up to the dining-room. The two members who roomed at the Club were dining together at a small table just behind him, and he could hear snatches of their conversation, small talk about business, club-life, and people he knew. He paid no attention to them, though there was no one else in the big room. He wondered how men could stand it to live in that way, to dine in such dreary loneliness; for his part he had never cared to live at a club. Yet the bachelor's life had its advantages, for they could talk about the wives of other men with impunity; they had nothing to fear, nothing to worry about, and at the moment he almost envied the two men back of him. Just then he heard one of them say, "Delaney has made a lucky hit lately."

A Straight Tip

"How 's that?"

"Must have got a tip on Union Copper, for he began buying 'way down, and now it 's in the nineties. If dividends are resumed it will go to par, and he will stand to make a mighty pretty sum."

"Guess he needs it badly enough."

"I hear he has plunged for all he 's worth, and if the stock should drop he would go broke; but they say there is no doubt about a dividend at the next meeting of the directors."

John Wilton leaned over the paper which he had spread out on one side of his table and appeared absorbed in the news on the front page; he did not wish to be caught in the attitude of listening, but he could not help overhearing, and every word made an impression. So Delaney had acted upon the tip he had given him and bought Union Copper. The meeting of the directors was to be held in New York the following week, a dividend would be declared, the stock would undoubtedly go to par, and Delaney would clean up a lot of money. But if the dividend should be passed again — what then? The stock would drop lower than it ever had been, and — and Delaney would go broke. That was what the man behind him had said, and the words sank deep into John Wilton's slightly befuddled brain.

CHAPTER XXI

DELANEY'S LAST PLAY

IT so happened that the regular quarterly meeting of the directors of the Union Copper Company fell upon the Tuesday preceding Thanksgiving, — an inconvenient date, as it gave directors attending from a distance scant time to return home. However, John Wilton promised to be back for Thanksgiving dinner, — promised not his wife, but the Major, who insisted imperiously that everybody should be on hand holidays.

“ ‘Oo ’ll be back, papa,” he said as his father picked him up and kissed him good-bye on the Sunday afternoon when he was leaving the house to take the Limited.

“Yes, I ’ll be back, Major, sure, Thursday morning.”

“Bwing me a box toclates.”

Wilton promised not to forget the chocolates, gave the little fellow a final hug, put him down in the vestibule, and hastened out. He did not inquire for his wife to say good-bye, — in fact, he had not mentioned the fact that he was leaving that afternoon, as he was under the impression she was out somewhere. Mrs. Jack was not out, but in her room. She saw the footman take the hand-bag out to the carriage, she waited and heard her husband go down the stairs quickly, caught the sound of little Harold’s voice, saw Wilton jump into the carriage, wave his hand to the child, and disappear rapidly down the street.

It was the first time he had ever left the city without in-

Delaney's Last Play

quiring for her; once or twice he had gone when she was out of the house, but he had always left some word. Perhaps he had this time; no, she knew perfectly well he had not; he had tried to avoid her; for several days they had seen little of each other, — in fact, not since the evening she was with Delaney in the park. There were moments when she wondered if by any possibility her husband could have seen her, or if he had received another anonymous letter. Of the two contingencies the latter seemed far the more likely; that something had happened was certain. A feeling of depression stole over her as she saw the carriage disappear in the distance.

Everything had gone wrong since that afternoon. Delaney had not been to see her; he had not even telephoned. She had called him up once and asked him to dinner, but he pleaded some excuse so awkwardly that she knew he did not wish to come. It was only too plain he was trying his best to avoid her; instead of being angry, as she would have been ten days before, she was afraid,— as if she faced some impending calamity.

She looked forward to seeing Delaney on Thanksgiving Day; he was coming for dinner; the invitation had been given and accepted long before, and he had promised the Major most faithfully to dine with him. It would be a family dinner at six o'clock, so little Harold could be at the table,— only Will Ganton and Delaney besides themselves. She was certain he would not break his word to the Major, however much he might wish to avoid her, so she waited.

John Wilton knew nothing of all this. He did not understand that Larry Delaney was doing his best to keep away from his wife; all he grasped was that he had seen them

Ganton & Co.

together in the park the week before, and he assumed that what he then saw was repeated at every convenient opportunity,— why not?

Tuesday Will Ganton came down from the Yards and met Delaney at the Club at luncheon, and together they walked back to the latter's office. Union Copper had been fairly active during the morning and was steadily advancing; at noon it sold as high as ninety-eight; everybody on the Street took it for granted dividends would be resumed.

"What time is the meeting?" Will asked as they walked along Jackson Boulevard.

"Twelve o'clock is the hour, but they will probably do nothing until after luncheon," Delaney answered.

"You feel pretty sure about the dividend, Larry?" Will's tone betrayed some anxiety. He was carrying a big load; he had borrowed every cent he could and plunged heavily. "As it is, I stand to make over fifty thousand dollars; I have half a mind to sell and take my profits."

"I am as certain as a man can be who has the word of an insider who knew what he was talking about. Besides, look at the stock. It would not advance so steadily if there were any doubt about the matter. I am taking greater chances than you are, yet I don't propose to sell. The stock will go to 110 easily when on a dividend basis." Delaney spoke so confidently that Will felt reassured; the disposition to hang on and make just a little more is supreme in the speculator's breast.

On entering the office they went at once to the ticker clicking irregularly in the corner; the tape showed sales of Union Copper at ninety-eight, ninety-eight and a quarter,

Delaney's Last Play

a half, five-eighths, three-quarters, and a thousand shares at ninety-nine.

"By Gad, but she's a-booming!" Will exclaimed. "If I had the money to put up I'd buy five hundred shares right now."

"I guess they'd carry you downstairs for five hundred more if you want the stock," Delaney replied, referring to the big firm of brokers on the ground floor, through which he did most of his New York business. He telephoned down, and after a moment's delay the reply came that they would be glad to execute the order if Mr. Ganton would send down his note for five thousand dollars. It took but a few moments for Will to sign the note and send it down by the small office-boy. He and Delaney returned to the ticker, Union Copper had already touched ninety-nine and a half.

"You will be lucky if you get that five hundred under par," Delaney remarked.

"It's all right — it's a purchase anyway," Will no longer felt doubtful of the outcome, he was all excitement as he fingered the narrow ribbon of paper nervously. Delaney himself was not unmoved, chewing his unlighted cigar to suppress his elation. It meant to him relief from pressing obligations and more than enough money to carry him through the winter. He had staked everything he had, the little money he could raise, exhausting his credit with banks, brokers, and friends. He had even borrowed money on securities which did not belong to him,— this worried him, and he did not like to think of it, but he had not used the securities until he was sure he was taking no chances, until he felt absolutely certain the stock would go up, and he intended to take them up with the proceeds of the very first sales he made. As he

Ganton & Co.

watched the tape he could not help thinking of John Wilton and feeling grateful for the tip so generously given, and he was glad he had been firm and had steadfastly kept away from Mrs. Jack, experiencing the novel satisfaction of a man unaccustomed to denying himself forbidden pleasures. He was even sorry he had promised to dine there Thanksgiving night,—if it were n't for the Major he would not go. He wished he could get out of it in some way,—perhaps he could.

“Five hundred at ninety-nine seven-eighths,—I guess that 's my stock,” Will exclaimed, and Delaney, arousing himself from his momentary abstraction, again glanced at the tape.

“Guess you 're right. Next sale will be at par, and then we must begin to think about letting a little go.”

“Not much,” Will exclaimed jubilantly, “I 'll hang on until it touches —”

He did not finish. The ticker, which had been operating lazily and intermittently, started suddenly into life, and the tape showed a sale of Union Copper at ninety-nine and three-quarters, then two thousand shares at ninety-nine and a half, followed immediately by sales at ninety-nine, ninety-eight, ninety-seven, and ninety-six; when the stock struck ninety-five a perfect flood came onto the market, and the price broke to the eighties in a few minutes, with no bottom in sight.

At the first break Will Ganton turned to Delaney.

“What is the matter, Larry?”

The latter did not reply, but went to the telephone, called up the office down below, and asked if they had anything from New York on Union Copper. The answer came back:



“Not much,” Will exclaimed jubilantly, “I’ll hang on until it touches —”



Delaney's Last Play

"Just got a confidential wire that a majority of the directors is in favor of passing dividend,— that 's all."

That was enough. If true, it meant serious trouble for Will Ganton; it meant ruin and disgrace for Delaney.

"It can't be true, Larry, it's some damned stock-jobbing scheme." Will's face was flushed with anger; he felt as if some one were trying to trick him.

While they were speaking there were sharp calls over the telephone for additional margins. All Delaney could do was to tell the brokers to close out his account, he could not put up another cent. The active partner in the big firm down below came hurrying up.

"They have passed the dividend, and the stock will drop to seventy or lower," he exclaimed. "What shall we do, Delaney, with the stock we are carrying for you and Mr. Ganton?"

"Close mine out," Delaney answered calmly; "I have nothing to put up."

"Your margins are already more than exhausted. Have you no securities that you can put up to protect us against loss?" the broker asked coldly.

"Nothing; I have put up everything —"

"You know what that means?"

"Yes; I cannot help it. Close out the account, and protect yourself as best you can," Delaney said slowly. He suddenly remembered the securities which he had put up and which did not belong to him. "Look here — those bonds I left with you last week — I wish you would hang on to those a little while, and give me a chance to redeem them in some way."

The broker eyed Delaney suspiciously. From the lat-

Ganton & Co.

ter's manner he more than half suspected that the bonds belonged to some customer, and he feared there might be trouble with the owner if he held on to them; such things were not uncommon in their business.

"Sorry, but I can't do it. Those bonds are the best collateral you have with us, and we must get what we can out of them; we stand to lose anywhere from five to ten thousand as it is. It's hard to realize on the stock, now everybody is unloading. Of course Mr. Ganton can take care of his trades?" The man looked inquiringly at Will, who had been watching the ticker and at the same time listening to the conversation without fully comprehending at first the extent of the disaster; when asked if he was prepared to take care of his trades, his face again reddened with anger, he turned upon Delaney, and fairly shouted:

"Look here, Delaney, it strikes me we've been played for suckers. Who gave you that tip about the dividend?"

Delaney hesitated, as he did not wish to mention Wilton's name. Will Ganton noticed the hesitation and instantly became suspicious.

"By Gad, Delaney, I want to know who gave out that tip."

Delaney thought a moment, then he replied slowly:

"You have the right to know, Will; it was John Wilton himself. The night we all dined there he told me dividends would be resumed at this meeting."

"Wilton told you that!" the broker exclaimed. "Why, our New York correspondent says he and his friends defeated the resolution; that is why the stock is dropping out of sight. If Wilton is against a dividend, there must be something wrong with the company, as he never plays the Street."

Delaney's Last Play

"Well, it was he who gave me the pointer," Delaney insisted.

"That 's mighty queer, for I cannot see what reason he could have for wishing to do up you and Mr. Ganton."

"He did n't know anything about my being in the stock," Will remarked gloomily.

"Oh!" the broker exclaimed significantly, as if an idea had suddenly occurred to him. He hurried back to his office to pass the word around to buy Union Copper, for there was probably nothing at all the matter with the company. Sure enough, in the closing half-hour of the session, the stock began to recover rapidly. But Delaney's account, and with it Will Ganton's, had been closed at almost the lowest figures of the day.

Delaney was too insignificant a figure in the great world of high finance for the announcement of his failure to cause more than a passing ripple on the surface; it was of greater moment in social circles. Bankers and brokers who were not directly involved read the news with the callous indifference of their class, though their wives manifested a much more curious interest; and when they learned that John Wilton had caused the drop in Union Copper, this was more than sufficient to set tongues wagging. Even the Street — ever suspicious and never charitable — began to suspect Union Copper had been used for a purpose. One paper in commenting on the unexpected action of the directors said:

"It is an open secret the action of the directors was a surprise to themselves. A dividend was confidently expected, and it was not until the meeting that Wilton announced himself as opposed on the ground, so it is stated, the company

Ganton & Co.

can use more working capital to advantage; but the published statement of the condition of the company shows a large increase in the surplus and ample working capital; there are rumors afloat that considerations of a personal nature influenced the leader of the majority of the board."

A gossip society weekly contained this item:

"Since the duello is no longer in vogue, the injured husband must get his revenge in ways more in accord with the commercial spirit of the age. Instead of the sword, the large corporation may be manipulated so as to humiliate the hated rival."

It was not until he bought the Chicago papers of Wednesday while on his way home that John Wilton learned of Delaney's disastrous failure. As he read the brief mention in the news columns a grim smile of satisfaction spread over his features. He could not help exulting over the downfall of the man he detested; but when he read the more detailed accounts on the financial page, and learned that Delaney was thousands of dollars worse off than nothing, that he was probably involved deeper than any one knew, that he was utterly ruined, a feeling of pity stole into his heart. John Wilton was generous to a fault; never before had he deliberately set about to injure any one. He began to feel ashamed of himself; he dropped the papers on his lap and sat gazing out of the window upon the fields as they went scurrying by in their light mantle of freshly fallen snow. Was it worth while, he kept asking himself,—was it worth while to wreak his vengeance in that way, to jeopardize the interests and reputation of a great company to crush a man he did not like? Was it a manly and decent thing to do? That troubled him, and he began to drop in his own estimation. His revenge no

Delaney's Last Play

longer gave him any satisfaction; the more he thought about it the less he liked it. Later, when the waiter came along and rapped at the door of the compartment to ask if he was not going in to luncheon, he said no; he did not care for anything to eat. All the afternoon, until the train pulled into the dingy station in Chicago, he sat looking moodily out of the window.

All day Wednesday Delaney did the best he could to aid the brokers and bankers in straightening out his affairs; not that they were very complicated, but he was indebted in so many directions. He worked so steadfastly and so quietly, and seemed so desirous of helping all he could, that more than one man expressed sympathy for him.

"Better luck next time, Larry," said one of his friends.

"There will be no 'next time,' my boy; this is my last," Delaney answered with a queer smile. He knew it would be only a day or two before the owners of the securities he had hypothecated would discover what he had done, and that meant — he did not like to think of the consequences, but he knew that to remain in Chicago meant arrest and prosecution. He had done many things in a business way which were not right, but never before had he taken and used what belonged to others; never before had he placed himself where he could be classed with common thieves and embezzlers. He wondered what some of his friends would say, what Carrie Trelway would say, what May Keating would think, how Mrs. Jack would feel. Strange to say, he felt more confidence in the charity of the two former than in Mrs. Jack's; her pride would be offended, her own selfish considerations would more than counterbalance any feeling for him. And

Ganton & Co.

there was the Major,—some day he would understand. The thought of the Major brought a lump into Delaney's throat.

A few of his creditors met on Thanksgiving morning and spent an hour and a half in going over his books and papers. There were not many to go over; he kept his accounts in one small ledger, in such a manner that only he could supply the key, and most of his papers were locked up in the safety-deposit vault in the basement. As the vault was not open that day, it was agreed they should all meet the next morning, at ten o'clock to make up a final inventory and statement.

Delaney took luncheon at an obscure eating-house in Fifth Avenue. He went there because he felt certain he would not meet a soul he knew, but he was mistaken. The girl who served his coffee, rolls, and cold tongue recognized him. She had once worked at the Wiltons', and everybody who worked there liked Delaney with that curious devotion which the servant ever displays toward the generous friend of the mistress.

"Why, Mr. Delaney, what are you doing here on Thanksgiving Day?" she asked as he took his seat on one of the high stools ranged along the moist and shiny counter.

He looked up surprised, and for a moment could not recall where he had seen the girl. When he remembered, he replied with a friendly smile:

"I did not suppose any one here would know me. I have been working all the morning, and just stepped around for a cup of coffee and a bite to eat."

"Well, I never expected to see you at a ten-cent lunch-counter," the girl laughed as she filled his order; "and of all days!"

Delaney's Last Play

"It is not the first time, Katy."

"Not but what the things to eat are good enough," she exclaimed with a show of pride in her occupation, "but somehow it seems queer to see you sitting there and eating just like — just like —" She did not know how to express herself without offending.

Delaney laughed,—the first time he had laughed that day,—and felt grateful to the girl for pulling him out of himself.

"Just like an ordinary, every-day man, you meant to say, Katy?" The girl nodded her head. "Well, that is all I am — to-day. To-morrow," his voice dropped, "I may be something more."

"You ought to marry and have a home of your own, Mr. Delaney," the girl said in a tone of firm conviction as she gave him another little square pat of suspiciously yellow butter.

"Marriage is a lottery, you know," he answered smiling.

"It's no more of a lottery than speculation. Men come in here every day who lost everything they had on the Board of Trade. They lunch at the Club as long as they can afford it, then they drop down here. Oh, I see and hear a lot of things."

Delaney glanced up suspiciously, wondering if the girl had heard of his failure. No; she had not, as was apparent from her unconscious manner. But if he came once or twice more she would suspect the truth and learn all about him.

When he had paid the quarter for his meagre luncheon he left a five-dollar bill on the counter, remarking, "For the sake of — old times, Katy," and passed out.

The girl stood with a towel in one hand and the empty

Ganton & Co.

coffee-cup in the other, too dazed to say a word; but as he disappeared down the street she exclaimed to herself, "Well, I never! That's just like him. There's something wrong, or he would never have given me that fiver."

Delaney walked slowly east in Adams Street. At the corner of La Salle he stopped and waited for a carette. The street was nearly deserted. The air was chill, the sky gray, and there was a swirl of snow which blew hither and thither about the great, tall, grimy buildings. It was certainly not a bright and cheerful Thanksgiving Day. As the carette came lumbering along, Delaney took a last look at the Board of Trade at the head of the street. How sinister and forbidding it seemed at the moment!—even less inviting than the great county jail on the North Side. How many men had been ruined within those gray stone walls!—more than any one knew, more than any one could ever find out, men and women all over the country, in every city and village, even in regions remote, from bankers and brokers to drovers and farmers and small merchants, clerks and employees, ruined directly or indirectly by what was done within those four walls.

Silent and deserted for the time being, on the morrow it would awaken to life, and the great room, with its many pits, its hundreds of telegraph instruments, its hurrying messenger boys, its crowd of excited traders, would resound with the hoarse cries of speculation, but he would not be there; for him the Board would remain forever silent and closed, even as — the carette rolled noisily past the corner, and the Board passed out of sight.

Delaney found at his rooms two notes, one from Mrs. Jack, in which she said briefly they would surely expect him

Delaney's Last Play

for dinner at half-past six instead of six, and would wait for him if he were late. Evidently she knew nothing about her husband's connection with his losses and failure, otherwise she would realize that he could not dine with them.

The other note read as follows :

“ MY DEAR LARRY:— It is too bad, and I am so sorry for you. If I had any money I would give it to you to help you out; but I am poorer than you are, since I am a woman — and that is a deficit to begin with. As it is, all I can offer is my heartfelt sympathy; if this could be distributed among your creditors it would be more than enough to pay them in full. Of course you will come out all right in the end; meanwhile I know how you must feel, and I want you to know that you have friends who stand by you and sympathize with you.

“ Now don't shut yourself up and get moody, but make the best of the situation. Do not fail to dine with us to-night. We shall expect you, and I, for one, shall eat no dinner until you come,— there!

“ Sincerely,

“ MAY K.”

Delaney's eyes were moist when he finished reading the note; he read it once again, and pressed it to his lips almost reverentially before going to the fireplace to tear paper and envelope in small pieces and cast them into the grate.

He spent the afternoon going through trunks and boxes and drawers, searching out cards and notes and letters, photographs and little souvenirs of every kind which could in any way betray his friends if they fell into strange hands. It was a long task. He was surprised himself at the accumulation of years. It had never been his habit to keep evidences of the imprudences and follies of others, and yet there were notes and letters he ought to have destroyed long ago,

Ganton & Co.

and many he thought he had destroyed. Some of the letters he threw into the fire with careless indifference, others he read, many of them for a second or third or fourth time, before he dropped them into the flames, reading them with all the wistful yearning for the past that creeps over a man when he recalls happy hours forever spent, faces and places never to be seen again under the same delightful conditions.

It seemed to him as if he were reviewing his life. When he threw his head back and closed his eyes, a panorama of scenes and events and persons passed rapidly before his inner vision; so slight a thing as a bit of faded blue ribbon sufficed to recall a ball he had long forgotten, a ball in one of the great houses of New York that he had attended the first year out of college, when friends were many and life was promising; the crush and the jam, the sea of faces, the whirl of the dancers, the music,—all was vague and indistinct, save a corner, a window-seat, some protecting portieres, a fair young face with blue eyes, a white dress, and — a bit of blue ribbon. How they had danced and danced until intoxicated with the music, aglow with the excitement of the occasion, made mad by the spirit of the hour, he had talked of love, and she had listened, and for the time being everything seemed so easy of fulfilment; but of that evening with all its music and intoxication, with all its passionate avowals and tender responses, there remained — only a bit of faded blue ribbon. How much better it would have been for him, perhaps for her, if the tie had been just a little stronger!

Again the fragment of a card, which bore in pencil the one word "Yes," written hastily, impulsively, served as a key to release a flood of vivid recollections, — recollections far different from those aroused by the bit of blue ribbon, a

Delaney's Last Play

winter's folly, a woman's devotion, jealousy and hatred, his own cynical indifference,— how strange it all seemed!

There was one packet of letters, most of which bore foreign postmarks; these he had carefully kept under double lock and key,— not that it ever afforded him any pleasure to read them, but with the notion that some day they might prove of use to him. As he cut the cord that bound them together and looked at them one by one, a bitter smile crept into his face; she was the one woman he had loved, blindly, madly, passionately — and she had wrecked his life. For her he had done things which caused men to look upon him with suspicion, things for which he despised himself; with her he had lived in a fool's paradise for a time, spending all he had and more than he could make fairly and honestly; for her he had thrown over friends and destroyed every prospect in life. In the end, after he had given her not only his name, but had squandered the present and discounted the future, she had left him with the same heartless indifference he had left others; had gone to live abroad how and with whom he did not know and did not dare to guess, and all that remained was this packet of letters. If he had only married the bit of blue ribbon, how much better! It would have taken so very little to make of him a different man

It was after six o'clock when Delaney finished going through his desk, his trunks, and every nook and corner where by any possibility anything of a personal nature might be found. He even tore out the fly-leaves of a number of books which had been given him. He did not wish to leave behind so much as the scratch of a pencil which might involve a friend.

Ganton & Co.

When the last scrap of paper was destroyed, he walked to the window and looked out upon the street below. There was still snow in the air, and the walks and pavement were white. A cab went by, jolting over the rotten and rough round block pavement. Some one hurrying for dinner, he thought to himself.

It so happened the man in the cab, hurrying north, was Will Ganton on his way to dine at the Wiltons'. Afterward he remembered glancing up at his friend's rooms, and recalled that he saw no light in the windows.

There was not a soul in the house. The people on the first floor were away for the day; the maid who looked after his rooms had gone out; and he was alone.

He heard the clock in the room below chime the half-hour,—it was half-past six. At that moment they were expecting him at the Wiltons' — Mrs. Jack, May, and the Major. Yes, the Major would wonder and ask why he did not come; the Major would miss him, even if no one else did. Delaney pulled away at his moustache as he thought of the little fellow he would never see again. "It's all right, Major," he muttered to himself; "it's all right. You and I part friends now, but some day you would have learned to hate me. It is a good deal better as it is." He wished he had sent the little fellow a box of candy, and felt irritated to think he had not. "Yes; I'm a brute, Major; I forgot all about it,—just a selfish brute, thinking all day long about my own affairs, as if they were worth thinking about."

He was still standing by the window looking out, but he no longer saw the street or the snow-covered pavement, or the flickering light of the street-lamp opposite; he saw the

Delaney's Last Play

great dining-room in the Wilton mansion, with its fine white napery, extravagantly decorated china, and profusion of silver and gold. How well he knew that table and every feature of the costly service! There was Wilton at one end and Mrs. Jack at the other; May Keating and Will Ganton on one side, the Major and his vacant chair on the other. They were waiting for him, — of that he felt quite sure. John Wilton alone would understand his absence. He would not expect him under the circumstances, but he could hardly explain matters to the others, therefore they would wait — how long? That would depend upon the hold he still retained upon their friendship; the Major at all events would not want to begin without him. He should have sent word he could not come; that would have been the right thing to do.

It must be nearly seven now; they would not wait much longer.

He turned from the window, went quickly to the bureau in his bedroom, and from the small top drawer on the left-hand side, near his bed, took out a revolver; returning, he held it down and examined it carefully by the flickering light of the fire, to make sure it was loaded. Seating himself in his easy-chair by the table, he threw his head back, and without a moment's hesitation raised his hand, placed the muzzle of the pistol against his temple, and pulled the trigger. . . .

There was a flash that seemed to light up everything, a crash like a thousand peals of thunder rolled into one, a thud, a blow that caused every fibre of his being to vibrate; but there was no pain. For an instant every faculty seemed

Ganton & Co.

alive; strange memories poured in upon him, scenes of his childhood long forgotten swept before him; his home, his mother, the town in which he was born and where he spent his boyhood days, the face of every playmate, school days, and college days, — all came back to him as vividly as the details of a scene start out of the blackness of night under a flash of lightning. For the time being his mind was aroused to a state of abnormal excitement; it was as if a piece of delicate mechanism had received a rude shock which caused every part to tremble and oscillate to the verge of destruction; cells and fibres long disused thrilled into life. He knew what he had done, he knew he had tried to kill himself; he remembered seating himself in the chair and throwing his head back on the cushion, just as he had done thousands of times before when he wished to think and dream; he remembered placing the pistol against the side of his head and pulling the trigger; then, instead of death and darkness and instant annihilation, life and light intense. He had failed in his attempt; they would find him wounded and mutilated; the surgeons would work over him to preserve the life he valued so lightly,—how ridiculous! Still he must try again; but the thought produced no movement, no sensation of action. It was as if he were detached from his body; as if he were far removed from things physical, as if he were at the same time within and without the room, within and without the world itself. Time itself seemed strangely condensed, the scenes of his life did not pass before him in sequence, in chronological order, but as an entirety, as if childhood and boyhood and manhood were one, as if their apparent separation were only a freak of the imagination or a trick of memory. . . .

Delaney's Last Play

The world of appearances faded away; faces grew dim and recollections vague and shadowy; the startled cells and fibres of the brain sank to rest, and all was — peace.

When they found his body the next morning his brains were oozing from a jagged hole in the right temple; death had been instantaneous — the doctor said.

CHAPTER XXII

OUT OF THE YARDS

SATURDAY morning Will Ganton told his father about his losses in the market. He could not postpone the disagreeable interview longer, as the banks and brokers were pressing him for a settlement. It was not that they doubted his ability to make good any losses, but the unpleasant disclosures which followed Delaney's death made every one in the Street suspicious concerning trades with which the latter had anything to do.

The old man was propped up in bed, reading the morning paper, when Will entered the room.

"So that Delaney was no better than a common thief. He used his customers' securities to raise money." John Ganton took a savage satisfaction in reading the exposure of Delaney's affairs. He had never liked him, looking upon him as a "club fellow" and a society chum of Will's, whose influence was anything but good.

"That is one of the things I came in to talk about," Will said hesitatingly; he hardly knew how to begin.

"Well, what is it?" The old man dropped the paper on the bed and looked up suspiciously. "You don't mean to say you are involved in that rascal's affairs," he continued harshly, half divining the truth from his son's expression.

"Yes; I am," Will blurted out, "I bought Union Copper when he did, and stand to lose over forty thousand dollars." There was a look of dogged defiance in his eyes.

Out of the Yards

For a moment or two the silence was ominous; John Ganton's gray eyes half closed and his jaws set so tightly that Will could hear the teeth grind together.

"So," he muttered hoarsely, "you have been speculating again."

"I needed the money." Will's tone expressed the dogged defiance that was in his look.

"To get married, I suppose; to marry that girl." The old man's voice expressed his bitterness and hatred. "Well, you have n't got it, and you are forty thousand dollars worse off than nothing. What are you going to do about it?"

"Raise the money in some way and make good what I owe." The young man was getting angry, and his manner showed it.

"Then go out and raise it,—what are you bothering me for? I told you if you speculated again not to run to me for help. Go tell that girl you are forty thousand dollars worse off than nothing, and see if she will be so anxious to marry you. What do you suppose she cares for you?" the old man continued hoarsely,— "what do you suppose she cares for you? It's my money she's after,—I know the breed. But she won't get a cent,—not a red cent."

Will's face was flushed and ugly.

"I'm not asking you for money; and I don't want to hear anything more against that girl. She's as good as we are, and a damned sight better. Because Jem Keating got the better of you in a deal you are down on him. I don't want your money, and you can take it and go to—" the last word died on his lips; angry as he was, reckless as he always was when angry, there was something in the deathly look of his father that brought him to his senses just in time.

Ganton & Co.

A spasm of pain seized the old man. He dropped back on the pillows, great beads of sweat starting out on his forehead, his features writhing in anguish as he clutched at his right side with both hands and groaned deeply.

In an instant Will's anger evaporated; he rushed to the bedside exclaiming:

"What is it, father? What can I do? Shall I call mother?"

The old man shook his head, and as the pain subsided he collapsed limp and exhausted. His skin, even to his hands, was moist with perspiration. Slowly and almost mechanically he mopped his forehead with the handkerchief that lay on the coverlet. His hand was so thin and his movements so feeble that Will's heart was filled with pity,—he would have given anything to recall his bitter words, but it was too late. John Ganton had heard them, even in the midst of his pain he caught the significance of every syllable, and he did not forget. He was vindictive; he never forgot, he never forgave. For a time he was too exhausted to say anything, making no response in any way to Will's overtures of sympathy and affection; as he recovered his strength his face assumed the hard, relentless expression Will knew so well, and when he did speak, slowly and with an effort, all he said was; "You have some stock in Ganton & Co. I will buy it. Take it to Browning. He will give you a check this morning, then you are — free to do as you please."

"But, father —" This time there was a ring of anguish in the young man's voice.

"That's all," the old man interrupted relentlessly. "Take the stock to Browning this morning, and then leave the Yards." John Ganton's voice rose as he uttered the

Out of the Yards

last words, he turned on his left side with his face to the wall, and closed his eyes as if he wished to sleep. The interview was at an end; so far as his father was concerned, Will Ganton felt his own future was irrevocably determined.

That morning he indorsed his certificates of stock in blank and delivered them to Browning, went out to the Yards, cleared up his desk, and when he closed it at six o'clock he was no longer in the employ of Ganton & Co.

As he was leaving the Yards he met McCarthy near the gates; they walked along together.

"How is the governor?" McCarthy asked.

"Pretty bad, McCarthy; he is a sick man, and no mistake."

"That's bad, the business will miss him. He knows it from the ground up, that's sure. I suppose you'll be taking his place down town soon?"

"No; I'm out," Will answered abruptly. McCarthy looked up as if he did not quite understand.

"Yes; I'm out, McCarthy," the young man continued, with as much indifference as he could assume. "This is my last day in the Yards with Ganton & Co. The governor and I have split."

"Well, I'll be ——" McCarthy exclaimed. "You don't mean to say you've quit the job for good?"

"That's about the size of it."

"Well, I'll be ——" The old foreman could not finish his exclamation. Words failed him,—that Will Ganton should leave the Yards,—should leave Ganton & Co.,—if he had been discharged himself he could not have been more dumfounded.

As Will swung upon the step of a moving car and shouted

Ganton & Co.

good-bye, McCarthy still stood at the corner muttering to himself, "Well, I 'll be ——" When the news spread among the men they were sorry,— even the strikers who had suffered at Will's hands were sorry,— they all liked him, liked him for the brute-like strength and qualities that made him feared. More than one man remarked, "He 's a chip of the old block; that 's why they can't get on together."

Will did not go home that night; he felt a good deal as if he had no home; he had been told he was free to do as he pleased,— in other words, that he might shift for himself. What right had he to live under his father's roof and sit at his table? His reflections were many and bitter.

All day Sunday he sat about the Club trying to make up his mind what he should say to May Keating. There was but one thing to do, and that was, make a clean breast of it; yet how could he tell her all the brutal truth? How could he explain to her the reason why he and his father had parted in such anger? But she would suspect the truth; she would know it was on her account; there would be no use in trying to conceal anything from her.

From time to time he ordered a Scotch-and-soda to brace him up, until, when night came, he felt and showed slightly the effect of the whiskey he had taken so steadily during the day.

When he entered the Wilton reception-room his face was somewhat flushed, and he had the coarse look that May Keating had seen before and disliked so much. She recalled a saying of Delaney's, "Never marry a man until you have seen him drunk."

Mrs. Jack did not come down. She had kept her room most of the time since Delaney shot himself. She could not

Out of the Yards

get over the tragic death and the disclosures which followed; that it should turn out the man she had encouraged was a criminal, that in all likelihood he was married and no better than an adventurer, living on his wits, humiliated her. She did not care so much about his death,—that was the best thing he could have done; she did not care very much about him; she did care about herself. She had the unpleasant feeling that every woman she knew was gloating over her humiliation, that people were saying the most outrageous things about her and Delaney. Thank goodness, not a letter, not so much as a scrap of paper, had been found. She was wild with apprehension until Wilton himself made discreet inquiries, and learned that Delaney must have spent most of Thanksgiving afternoon destroying letters, photographs, and papers, the charred fragments of which filled the grate.

“The fellow had the instincts of a gentleman, anyway,” Wilton said to himself, and he could not help adding, “Poor devil! I wish I had kept out of it.”

When he told his wife that no letters or notes of a personal nature had been found, she exclaimed hysterically:

“There was nothing, Jack,—nothing — I never wrote him a line you could not see. . . . Don’t you believe me, Jack?”

He chewed away at the end of his moustache and looked out of the window without replying.

She sank down onto the sofa, sobbing convulsively; she did not care whether he believed her or not,—it did not matter so long as every note and letter had been destroyed.

When Will Ganton entered the room, May Keating felt sure something unusual had happened; never before had he come to see her after he had been drinking to such a percep-

Ganton & Co.

tible extent; instinctively she knew he had been trying to nerve himself to tell her something he was afraid to tell. As he sat there nervously twisting the fringe on the arm of the chair, he looked so dull, heavy, and stupid, so coarse and common, that a feeling of disgust, mingled with profound pity, came over her; surely he had never appeared quite like that before. Yes; she remembered that the night at the Club when he drank too much wine he had looked much the same, only that night he was boisterous, while now he sat there like a clumsy lout. She began to be angry with herself and with him; could it be possible that she had ever promised to marry such a man? And yet — there was so much that was worth saving in him, if his father could only see how little encouragement it would take.

She waited. He had attempted some commonplace remark, but she did not respond, she waited.

"I've got something to tell you, May," he said at length, hoarsely.

"I thought so," she responded quietly, almost indifferently; "what is it?"

"I'm out of the Yards." He kept his eyes fixed on the floor and tugged away at the fringe on the chair.

"Out of the Yards!" she repeated with a start. "What do you mean?"

"That's just what I mean,—out for good. I quit Ganton & Co. to-day,—must shift for myself. You might as well know the worst, May." The words came slowly, and his voice was just a little thick. He did not lift his eyes from the floor, he was afraid of her.

She looked at him a moment or two, her lip curling slightly as if in contempt.

Out of the Yards

"You have had another quarrel with your father?"

He made no answer.

"What is the matter now? Was it on my account? Tell me!" she said sharply.

"No; it was n't about you this time, May," he answered hurriedly, "that is — not entirely. It was mostly something else. You see I had been speculating a little. I bought Union Copper along with Delaney, and when they passed the dividend and the stock went down I stood to lose a good deal. To pay up I had to sell my stock in Ganton & Co., and — well, the governor dropped me out of the Yards. That 's all there is about it."

From his manner May Keating knew he had not told her all the truth, but she had heard enough. He had been thrown out of the business and was practically penniless; his father would probably provide a place for him, but not so long as he persisted in his intention of marrying her. The relentless old man was bound to break that match, even though in doing so he wrecked his son's future. For the first time since she had known that John Ganton was opposed to Will's marrying her because she was the daughter of Jem Keating, she began to feel the utter hopelessness of attempting to oppose his iron will. For that matter, was it worth while to struggle, she asked herself, as she looked at the coarse figure and flushed face opposite her; there was something of the father there, all the brute element, but little of that force which made John Ganton respected and feared by friends and foes alike. No; it was not worth while to hazard her own happiness and wreck his future by blindly fighting fate; the matter was hardly debatable now he was in no position to maintain a home. In a day or two every-

Ganton & Co.

body would know that he had left the company, and people would say he had been put out on her account. The best, the only fair thing to do was to break the engagement at once, before it was too late, and let him regain his position. They must come to an understanding now. . . . All these thoughts flashed through her mind as she sat there looking at him, hardly knowing how to frame in words what she wished to say.

“Well, May, what are we going to do about it?” he asked, looking up furtively after the manner of a child who dreads a scolding. The question gave her the opportunity she sought.

“There is but one thing to do, Will, and that is —” she hesitated, and then continued firmly, “break off our engagement. There is no use,” she went on hurriedly, as she saw he was about to protest, — “there is no use. Your father will never give in. He is bitter and relentless, he is a sick man, and he will cut you off, all on my account. We could not marry now if we wanted to. You have nothing, I — well, I am dependent upon others. Two needs do not make a plenty.”

He looked at her in dull amazement; all he could say was:

“Look here, May, you don’t mean to say — you don’t mean to say you’re going to throw me over?” He rose to his feet and took a step toward her, but she got up quickly and avoided him.

“I mean just what I say. It is better, — it is the only thing to do. I have no right to stand between you and your father. I have been wrong, wrong, wrong. Let us drop the matter now, right here, before it is too late. In a day or two everybody would know. You must go back to your old place to-morrow.”

Out of the Yards

"I'll be damned if I do!" he said doggedly, his face flushing a deeper red as anger and disappointment got the better of him.

With all a woman's tact she said soothingly:

"Do it because I ask you to, Will; it is for the best. We can wait; let the future take care of itself."

She knew that she was holding out a hope that might never be realized, but it was the only way to carry her point — to get him to avoid the notoriety and consequences of the open breach; that must be avoided at any cost.

It required both tact and persuasion to bring Will Ganton to her way of thinking. His impulse was to fight it out. He did not care what people said, and he would show his father he could get on. That was the way he felt, but in the end he promised to do as she asked, and he left the house with the firm intention of effecting a reconciliation with his father the next day. But the opportunity never came.

CHAPTER XXIII

THE SENTENCE OF DEATH

MONDAY morning John Ganton was so much worse that without saying anything to him his wife telephoned for the doctor.

He had not felt well all day Sunday. He was restless, complained of swelling in his feet and legs, and of the pain in his stomach.

"Don't bother me. I'll be better in the morning," he answered impatiently when his anxious wife timidly suggested calling the doctor. But toward night the pain became so acute that he could not sleep. It hurt him even to move his body, and he could not stand the pressure of the hot-water bag against his side. It seemed to him as if something had burst inside, and he carefully passed his hand over the hard lump and over his abdomen, which he could see was swollen, and the skin was tense like the head of a drum. He realized that he was a very sick man, that there must be something very serious the matter. But if the doctors came they would look him over and find the lump, and insist on cutting him open,—the thought frightened him more than the pain.

As he lay there flat on his back trying to sleep, it seemed to him that he was more wide awake with his eyes closed than with them open. With them open he saw only the dimly lighted room, the familiar objects, and the shadows on the wall; but with his eyes closed he saw everything.

The Sentence of Death

everybody, the Yards, the great steam-filled rooms, the bubbling vats, the men barefooted and sweaty moving about amidst the slime and offal, the sheep and the hogs and the cattle in the long narrow runways moving in an endless stream on to the killing-rooms. There were moments when it seemed as if a million great, round, meek eyes were fixed on him in reproach; he aroused himself with a start, and the four walls of his bedroom, with the shadows from the dim light, were a positive relief.

With feverish restlessness his mind wandered from one detail of his great business to another, worrying to think what would become of it if he did not get well. Every time he thought of Will a feeling of depression rather than of anger came over him, and he began to doubt whether he had treated the boy quite fairly; but then he saw the red and bloated features of Jem Keating, the worthless sot, the man who years before had — his heart filled with rage. Yet his mind did not dwell long on any particular matter; several times he tried to concentrate his thoughts, to forget, if possible, his sufferings, but his fancy wandered, queer shapes and imaginings assailed him. The shadows on the walls danced about as if suddenly imbued with life, coming toward him, bending over the bed, trying to snatch the clothes off him to get at the place on his side.

On a sudden he could see that they had knives in their hands. They would kill him, and with a cry of terror he tried to push the shadows away. For a second they vanished from the bedside and went back to their places on the walls. He thought he saw his wife moving about the room, — he had been dozing and dreaming, that was all. But soon the shadows began to dance about again as they

Ganton & Co.

came down from the wall, and this time he was sure they gathered about his bed and looked at him. He could see them more plainly, for it was daylight; he could even hear their voices. They were trying to talk to him, but he would not answer,— he knew better than that; he would keep quiet and pretend he was asleep, and they would go away, would go back to the walls and stay there. He would just hold to the bedclothes so they could not get at him. But he could feel them tugging, and as they grabbed him by the hands and held him tight, he tried to cry out, to scream for help, to roll over, to get away; but they held him, threw back the bedclothes, and he could feel them touch the spot on his side and tap on his stomach. He knew they were looking for a place to thrust their knives, and the sweat stood out upon his forehead as he groaned and fought, until in an agony of desperation he opened his eyes wide and saw his wife and three men about the bed. He recognized one as the doctor he had seen before, and as his mind cleared a little he knew the others were doctors. He must have been dreaming.

But who had called them? A frown came over his face, and he was on the point of ordering every one out of the room, when the one he knew spoke to him gently:

“You feel better now, Mr. Ganton?”

He did not feel any better, but he would not admit it. He would not tell those men, so he turned on his side and faced the wall without answering.

For a long time there was a hum of subdued voices. They were talking together, but he could not hear what they said, and had no desire to. So long as they did not bother him and did not try to meddle he did not care. . . . But why did they not go?

The Sentence of Death

In a little while they did go, and his wife bent over him.

"John," she said softly, "are you awake? Do you know me?"

That irritated him, and he answered impatiently:

"Of course I know you; why do you ask such a fool question?"

He could hear something like a sigh of relief as she said:

"The doctors want you to take this medicine, John."

He turned angrily.

"What are those doctors doing here? Who called them? Send them away. Tell them to go —" His voice died away in a groan, the intense pain he was suffering overcame him.

"You have been so sick all night long, that you did n't know me at all. We could n't do anything with you. Take this; the doctors say it will ease the pain."

He took the medicine without further protest, and eyed his wife suspiciously, as if desirous of asking something, and yet being afraid to. At length he said:

"Did they look me over at all?"

She hesitated a second and replied timidly:

"They had to, John. It could n't be helped,— they had to find out what was the matter."

He turned his head toward the wall. The worst had happened: he had not been dreaming; the shadows had come down and held him and pulled the clothes off.

"Well, what do they say?" he asked, as if indifferent to their opinions. "Do they want to cut me open?"

"Oh, no: not that," his wife exclaimed hurriedly. "I heard one say an operation would do no good."

A feeling of relief came over him. The terror of weeks

Ganton & Co.

lifted from his breast, and he no longer cared how many doctors looked him over so long as there would be no cutting. On the contrary, he felt a sudden curiosity to know what they did think was the matter with him.

"Have they gone?" he asked.

"No; they are down in the library holding a consultation."

"When they get their minds made up I want to see them.

. . . Who are they, anyway?"

She named the two best-known surgeons in the city, one a famous specialist in abdominal troubles.

"Yes; I've heard their names. They would rather cut a man up than eat. I wonder why they did n't want to cut into me."

When the doctors did come up he was wide awake and in possession of all his faculties; the pain had subsided, and he felt easier in every way. As they approached the bedside he eyed them with something of the old look of suspicion in the gray eyes, now deeply sunken beneath the overhanging bushy brows.

One of the surgeons, the famous specialist, cleared his throat as if about to speak, but got no farther than a guttural "Ahem!"

John Ganton became impatient; as the pain subsided his irritability increased.

"Well, what is the matter with me? That is what I'd like to know. Speak out, and don't try to hide things."

Again the eminent specialist cleared his throat, and tried to veneer the bitter truth with a series of high-sounding phrases.

John Ganton listened wearily; it was mostly Greek to him. He had not the faintest idea what the great specialist

The Sentence of Death

was talking about, except when peritonitis was mentioned; he knew what peritonitis was, a kind of an inflammation about the stomach, and if that was all then he would come around all right in a short time; but the lump in his side, why did they say nothing about that? At length he broke in abruptly:

"What's that lump in my side, doctor?"

The surgeon seemed confused; he looked at his colleagues, and it was so long before he replied John Ganton knew they were trying to conceal something.

"I want to know the truth, doctor, and no beating about the bush."

His voice was so firm and his manner so peremptory, that the three physicians understood they must let him know his real condition. Dropping his professional manner, the great surgeon tried to break the truth as kindly and gently as possible. His heart was not so callous he could pronounce the death sentence unmoved.

"I wish, Mr. Ganton, we could give you more encouragement, but the truth is, your condition is very serious. The trouble is with the liver; we fear you are suffering from a cancer —"

The doctor paused and looked at his silent colleagues. To John Ganton the term "cancer" carried a terrible significance. He knew it meant death sooner or later; he knew in most cases it meant an operation, and all his fears suddenly revived. Nerving himself, he asked hoarsely:

"Do you propose to cut me open, doctor?"

The surgeon shook his head doubtfully. "If it is a cancer it would do no good, Mr. Ganton."

"But suppose it is n't a cancer?" the old man was grasping at every straw.

Ganton & Co.

"The diagnosis is plain. We feel there can be very little doubt —"

"You are not sure; you don't know for certain," he muttered hoarsely.

"No; we do not know for certain, and we could only find out positively by opening it up so we could see."

For a long time John Ganton was silent, so long that the doctors thought the opiate was taking effect and he was going to sleep. But he was not; his mind was never more active than at that moment. He was thinking, thinking that after all it might be better to let them cut into him a little and make sure. He could not stand the awful suspense of the days and weeks to follow. He would rather die under the surgeon's knife than die by inches from hour to hour. In the presence of that malignant reality, a cancer, the idea of an operation suddenly lost all its terrors. He even felt angry with the fool doctors for not insisting upon finding out the truth at once. Why should they stand there guessing, as if his life were some game to be played by the wits? Why did they not go ahead and make sure? If that lump was a cancer he was a dead man anyway; if it was not, then they might take it out or do something; he must get rid of that lump or he would die. . . .

He opened his eyes. The doctors were whispering together in the centre of the room. What were they talking about now? Why didn't they speak up so he could hear?

"Doctor," he called out sharply.

The great specialist came to the side of the bed.

"Look here, doctor, I want you to find out for certain whether that is cancer or not. Will you have to cut very deep?"

The Sentence of Death

"No, Mr. Ganton, the operation would be very slight; there would be no danger connected with the mere exploration, but if it is cancer your condition is desperate, for the disease is well advanced." The great surgeon now spoke plainly and earnestly as man to man, with no subterfuge, no evasion in his manner. John Ganton liked him better and had confidence in him.

"Well, doctor," he said after a pause, "I don't propose to lie here and suffer hell without knowing whether I am dying or not. I want to find out, and find out quick, so go ahead."

With that he turned his face to the wall and closed his eyes. One of the doctors bent over and looked at him, and said softly, "He is going to sleep." He heard them tiptoe softly out of the room, and he was alone. He did not feel drowsy, and the pain was mostly gone, leaving only a dull sensation about his stomach. The hypodermic they had given him made him more comfortable, but he was not sleepy. He opened his eyes and gazed at the quaint pattern of the old-fashioned wall-paper, noticing that in one place the careless hanger had not matched the two strips of paper perfectly, and every flower up and down the line was slightly askew. It annoyed him so that he wondered why he had never noticed it before in all the years he had slept in that bed. It irritated him so he shut his eyes, but when he opened them later the flowers were still queer; he would have that fixed if they had to repaper the entire room; he would attend to that as soon as he got out,—but suppose he never got out, never left his bed; did not the doctor say it might come any moment? Even now *it* might be lurking in the hallway just outside his door, or hovering like a shadow beside his bed;

Ganton & Co.

he pulled the clothes tight about his neck and once more shut his eyes; this time he slept, but his sleep was troubled by strange dreams,—were they dreams or memories? He dreamed he was a child; he saw a dusty, sandy road stretching between fields of grain and green pastures; he was walking with his grandmother. Soon they came to a little old country burying-ground where the mounds were overgrown with weeds and thickets of brush, where the few headstones had toppled over and the boards with painted inscriptions had rotted and decayed; the burying-ground was no longer used; they turned in and came to a hole in the ground where two men were standing with shovels and ropes. He went to the side of the hole and peered in; there at the bottom, where the water trickled in, he saw a worm-eaten coffin, the lid was off and the coffin was half-filled with water, but he saw a face, a ghastly white and drawn face, a face which had great hollows for eyes, and it grinned and showed its teeth; he saw a mass of black hair coiled about the head, and the water kept trickling in. He staggered back and sat down on the pile of loose, damp earth, the men looked at him and laughed coarsely. His grandmother was crying, she remembered when that body at the bottom of the wet grave was filled with life, when it played about the house and trotted in her footsteps, when it knelt at her knees to pray and nestled by her side to sleep; she remembered when the end came, when the young bright eyes were closed in death, when the fair hands were clasped upon the breast, when the coffin was closed, and with a wreath of flowers was lowered into this grave to moulder and dissolve into earth again,—that was long years before, years before he was born; but his grandmother remembered it all as if but the day

The Sentence of Death

before. Now the grave was opened to move the body to a newer cemetery, she lived her sorrow over again, and she cried as she stood there tall and thin. That was death, that ghastly whiteness, those hollow sockets, the grinning mouth,—that was death. Covered with perspiration he awoke. His wife was sitting by the bed, some woman with a cap and in a queer dress was fussing with a bottle over by the bureau,—where did she come from? He could not have dozed more than three or four minutes.

“Are you awake, John?” his wife asked softly.

“Yes, what time is it?”

“Nearly four o’clock. The nurse wants to give you some medicine.”

He looked at his wife puzzled and helpless,—nearly four o’clock! He had slept almost all day; and they had brought in a trained nurse, a strange woman, without saying a word to him. He did not like it, and he should let her go just as soon as he got a little better; but not just now, for the pain had come back in his side and stomach, and she could give him something.

He took his medicine without protest, and lay there watching the nurse arrange the bottles and make an entry on a big sheet of paper spread on the bureau; he was curious to know what she put down, but did not ask.

That afternoon Browning cabled John to come home.

“There is not one chance in a thousand,” the surgeon said to Browning. “We shall make an incision to be absolutely certain, but there is no doubt.”

“How long will he live?” Browning asked anxiously.

“A week or a month,—no one can tell. The end often

Ganton & Co.

comes pretty quickly in these cases; not only the liver, but surrounding tissue, is badly involved, and he may die of hæmorrhage any minute."

"Then why operate?"

"He insists upon it, — to make sure of the diagnosis."

"That is strange, for he has always been mortally afraid of the knife. I never knew a man so afraid of an operation."

"Well, I don't blame him for wanting to know for sure what ails him. I should if I were in his place."

"But if it is n't cancer can you do anything to help him?"

"Probably not; whatever the growth is it is too firmly attached to the liver to be removed."

"Then the operation won't amount to anything in the end?"

"No, only we shall find whether there is a cancer or not."

Browning could not see much sense in cutting a man open to satisfy curiosity, even if the patient did insist.

"Doctors are altogether too willing to use the knife nowadays," he remarked to his wife that evening. He was anxious and worried and all at sea in the office without the commanding influence of John Ganton. Browning had never decided an important matter without referring it to his employer, and the foreign managers were expected to refer everything except routine business to the home office. John Ganton was more than the life, he was the very soul, of his great company; and unless some one of like force and decision could take his place the entire business must be reorganized on a very different basis.

"What will you do if he dies?" Mrs. Browning asked apprehensively.

"I don't know,— I'm sure I don't know. Will could never run the business even if —"

The Sentence of Death

"How about John?"

"I don't know. I am afraid he won't take hold; he does n't like the Yards."

"But he may have to, whether he likes to or not," Mrs. Browning remarked emphatically.

"It's hard driving an unwilling horse. I cabled John to-day,— the doctors said he ought to be here."

The news that John Ganton was very sick, that there had been a consultation of surgeons, that he could not live, that there would be an operation, and much more to the same effect spread over the city and through the Yards with lightning-like rapidity.

Within a few hours the rumors became greatly exaggerated and distorted. It was reported that there had been an operation and he had died under the knife, that it had turned out nothing was the matter, but the surgeons had killed him, — this the men at the Yards firmly believed until convinced to the contrary; though even when told that he was alive and probably in no immediate danger, they insisted the surgeons would kill him in the end.

Doc Ruggles did much to confirm this belief. He had no use for surgeons, veterinary or otherwise, of the modern school; he did not believe in the use of the knife; in his opinion a red-hot iron was worth a dozen knives, and a blister never killed any one.

"I'd fix that lump in his side," he said, nodding his head emphatically, "I'd burn that out of him in a jiffy," and not a man about Ganton & Co.'s stables doubted old Doc's ability to do what he said he could; not one of them was afraid of a red-hot iron, but a knife — that was very different. In their business knives were used to kill.

CHAPTER XXIV

JOHN GANTON'S VISION

ALL the morning long, John Ganton watched the preparations for the operation. He refused to be moved to a hospital; he did not care to die cooped up in one of those terrible buildings.

The big front guest-room, which had not been used since, since — he could not recall when it had been occupied — was thrown open, cleaned, dusted, and aired, although it really did not need cleaning or dusting, for it was kept in perfect order. He insisted on having the door of his room left open, so he could see what was going on.

First one of the surgeons came with a younger man who had a silky, blonde beard, wore glasses, and smelt like a drug-shop; this young man bustled about with an air of such importance it irritated the old man. "I wonder who that young idiot is," he said to himself. The young fellow ordered the carpet up and the floor scrubbed with some queer liquid. The curtains had to be taken down, leaving only the shades. The stuffy upholstered furniture was moved out. The huge mahogany bed was carried into the third story, and a narrow white-enamelled iron bed, hardly more than a cot, put in its place.

"I wonder if the young idiot thinks I am going to sleep in that," the old man muttered as he watched these changes with a hostile eye.

When he learned the young man was one of the assistants

John Ganton's Vision

to the celebrated specialist, the little confidence he had in surgeons evaporated completely; if they could tolerate such half-ripe whipper-snappers about them, then their profession was as big a sham as he had always thought it was. It annoyed him to hear his nurse call the young idiot, with a beard like a floss of green corn, "Doctor," as if he knew enough to be anything more than an office-boy; the three physicians, taken together, did not put on so many airs as this young fellow.

A little later he heard heavy footsteps on the stairs, and two men came up carrying a long narrow thing with cloth on it, that looked at first like a box. The perspiration started out on his forehead and a cold chill went through him,— could it be a box,— a — a — For a moment he thought they were making preparations for the worst, until he saw that it was only a long, narrow table. "That must be the operating-table," he thought; "they will lay me on that, and then they will stick the knife in me." He shuddered, for whenever he thought of the knife all he could see was the pig-sticking room at the Yards, the small vat-like place where the sticker stood up to his ankles in blood and thrust his long, sharp knife in the throats of the squealing hogs as they slid rapidly down the iron runway, dangling from the track above by their hind legs. John Ganton knew how it was done, for he had stuck pigs himself,— just a quick jab with the long knife, right in the throat, a gush of red, warm blood, and the pig would go sliding on, squealing louder than ever, while a dozen more came dangling after it, each kicking and spouting blood as if its last mission in life was to get rid of all the blood it contained. He could see himself stretched upon that narrow table, he could see the

Ganton & Co.

knife, the cut, the blood,— he felt sick at his stomach, and partially turned away in the effort to shut out the vision.

By-and-bye another nurse came in the same cap and uniform, and with her a lot of bottles and queerly shaped dishes. She busied herself in the front room. Every time he caught a glimpse of her through the open doors and hallway she was cleaning and wiping the dishes, arranging the bottles, or squeezing out big sponges. She wanted to close the door, but he would not have it; he did not propose to be kept shut up like an old woman. He wanted to know what was going on,— it was his operation. He took a certain amount of satisfaction in feeling that all this was being arranged for him; that he was the principal personage in the drama to be enacted, and not the young idiot of a doctor, not the nurses, not even the great surgeon himself. He remembered that as a small boy going to the dentist to have a tooth out he was the centre of a group of admiring rather than sympathizing companions. They stood at the foot of the stairs while he went up, all his courage vanishing the moment he left them. Funny he should recall that experience of nearly sixty years ago at this time. Why, the narrow wooden stairway leading to the dentist's office was just as plain! The stairs were so dirty they probably had not been swept all summer. He had not noticed it at the time, for his bare feet were used to dirt in those days; but he remembered it now. The dentist was such a fussy little man, with red whiskers and a bald head; his small office had only one window, fronting on the main street of the village, and on this window was painted a big white tooth; there was a glass jar filled with teeth which had been pulled from young and old during the years he had practised

John Ganton's Vision

there,— more teeth from the old than the young, for all the boys and most of the girls carried theirs away as trophies. How plain it all appeared! That was his first operation, and beyond the pulling of hollow and aching teeth he had known no other.

During the days he had been in bed, during the hours he had restlessly wandered about the house, so many events and scenes of his early life had come back to him! When the pain was intense he could not concentrate his mind, he could not keep it within the narrow confines of the present, but as if released by bodily suffering, it ran riot over his entire career. Often he grew very tired of these endless recollections and tried to forget, tried to think of nothing at all, but when he succeeded in blotting out the past his present condition with all his disagreeable sensations rushed in upon him. Would he never rest? Would he never again be free from that terrible consciousness of self?

Three o'clock was the hour fixed for the operation. A little after one John Ganton had a long talk with his wife. He had not talked so long with her since — since — he could not remember when. For many years they had drifted apart in the big, gloomy house; in all her attachments and sympathies she had remained as she always had been, while he had developed along lines she could neither follow nor comprehend. They had lived under the same roof, but as two beings from different walks of life. In the presence of death they drew together once more; he leaned on her, and she felt pride in her burden.

During the hour they were by themselves her eyes were filled with tears, and more than once his own were wet. In

Ganton & Co.

spite of the doctor's assurance that there was no danger in the examination they were about to make, he feared he might not come out from under the anæsthetic, that he would never regain consciousness. All day long this notion haunted him.

He asked for Will, but Will had not been home since the Saturday before; he had not been seen at the clubs since Sunday, and no one knew where he was. When they told him Will could not be found, something of the old, angry look came into his face, but it passed away quickly, and he said nothing.

When they came in to prepare him he was lying quietly on his back, with his wife's thin white hand clasped in his.

His interest was at once aroused in all they did.

When the two nurses and the young assistant began to clean his side and abdomen with water and alcohol and some other liquid, and swathe him with linen bandages, he angrily told the young fellow to leave him alone, to let the nurses attend to him; then when he saw how surprised and chagrined the young man was, he was sorry he had spoken so harshly. The nurses bathed him so gently, he scarcely felt the pressure of their trained fingers; they handled him like a great baby. But he would not let the doctors carry him into the front room.

"I'm not so far gone as all that, doctor," he protested when they were about to pick him up. "I can manage to get there, if," he added, struggling to rise, "you will give me a lift."

He was bent and thin, and so feeble that as his wife saw him totter through the hall, she buried her face in both her hands and wept as if her heart would break,— she had never

John Ganton's Vision

expected to see her big, burly husband like that. They had told her to remain where she was until it was all over; the doctors had assured her many times there was no danger, for they did not intend to go very deep,— only far enough to find out what was the matter. It would be only a few minutes, half an hour at the most; but how long, how endlessly long it seemed since the door of that front room was closed, and then, when it did open —

Assisted by two of the doctors John Ganton walked feebly through the hall to the front room; he stopped just a moment at the door of his own room and looked back. Ever since the house was built he had slept in that room, and not a piece of furniture had been changed. He never cared for new things; the fact that the heavy black-walnut furniture, the best they could buy at the time, had long passed out of vogue did not bother him. Having adjusted himself to its ponderous pretentiousness, he found it comfortable. Now he saw the bed with the counterpane and blanket thrown back in disorder, he saw the stand at the head of the bed with its bottles and a glass half filled with water and the spoon from which he had taken his medicine a few moments before; he saw the bureau and the paper on which the nurse kept his record, her pencil lying where she dropped it after making the last entry. . . . What would be her next? he asked himself. His eye took in every detail in the few seconds he stood there steadying himself with one hand against the door jamb; last of all, his glance dwelt affectionately, even wistfully, on his wife, who had meekly taken her seat by the window to wait, obeying quite literally the doctor's injunction to sit down and be patient.

He might never enter the room again,— that was the

Ganton & Co.

thought which haunted him, and this last look seemed to him like a farewell.

All the doctors wore white gowns tied across their backs, even the young assistant was in white, as if he, too, played a part; he stood at the head of the long, narrow operating-table, and on the small stand beside him there were large, queerly shaped sponges, and a black bottle that held a pint or more. It annoyed John Ganton to see this young fellow with his silky blonde beard standing there with an air of such importance,— why did they have him around?

Pushed to one side there was a small square table with some things on it. They were covered with a towel, so he could not see what they were, but he knew that under the towel were the instruments; they had put them out of sight, so as not to frighten him, though, strangely enough, he was no longer afraid. The operation did not worry him; he was only anxious to get through with it, and find out whether or not the lump in his side was really a cancer. He even wished he could watch them open it so as to see for himself.

The doctors helped him on the narrow table covered with a white sheet; somehow the sheet looked to him as if it were already spotted and splashed with blood.

They were very gentle with him, talking to him as if he needed encouragement and reassurance:

“It will amount to nothing, Mr. Ganton.”

“It will be over before you know it.”

“You won’t feel anything at all.”

“If you will lie perfectly still and take the ether as if you were going to sleep, you will be under the influence in no time.”

They kept saying these things while they were arranging

John Ganton's Vision

him on the narrow table, but he made no reply. He did not care what they said, he was interested only in what they were doing.

They put broad straps about his legs, and he did not like it, he could not move. The doctors took hold of his hands gently but firmly, one on each side of the narrow table. He saw the surgeon, the specialist, nod almost imperceptibly to the young assistant with the silky blonde beard, and he heard something poured out of a bottle. There was a sweet, sickening odor; he knew the young assistant was filling the sponge with ether, and he wondered how they gave ether to make a man go to sleep, whether they held it under his nose, or —

Suddenly the big soggy sponge was pressed down over his mouth and nose, even to his eyes. He could not look up, he could not breathe, he smothered, suffocated, strangled,— he struggled to free himself. But they held his hands and arms, and some one took him by the head so he could not turn or twist,— he would die, they were smothering him, he tried to call out; but the big wet sponge deadened the cry into a groan. He held his breath, he would not inhale the sickening stuff; it went all through him, it made him sick at his stomach, he knew he should vomit, he could not help it, he felt the retching,—again he struggled to free himself, but this time more feebly. His strength was gone, he felt so tired. What was the use? He would just rest. He no longer minded the sweet smell of the ether,— it was rather pleasant. In fact, he could not smell it at all; the sponge felt so cool upon his face he hoped they would not take it away. He was not yet under the influence, he was sure of that. He could hear voices, though they sounded far away.

Ganton & Co.

No, he was not yet unconscious, they must not begin yet, they must wait,— a feeling of terror swept over him at the thought that they might cut into him before he was under the ether. He would cry out to let them know he was still awake; but he could not make a sound,— he was conscious, yet he could not speak, could not even groan. One hand was free, but he could not lift it, the other some one held and felt his pulse. Just as he felt so tired and sleepy he was about ready to doze off, the sponge was lifted a little and some one poked away at one of his eyes. What were they trying to do now? Some one pulled up one of his eyelids. It was the young assistant with the silky blonde beard. Why did n't he leave him alone? Why should he disturb him just as he was dropping off to sleep?

They stopped poking his eyes, and he felt the wet sponge again; but this time it was held lightly over his face and removed frequently, as if they wished to give him a chance to breathe. He did not care, he would just as soon breathe the ether now that he was used to it; in fact, he rather liked it. But he was not yet unconscious,— he could hear voices, but very distant, and he caught a clicking sound, as if they were rattling a lot of knives and forks in a basket. They were fussing with the instruments, but he was not unconscious, and they must wait a while yet. He would take deep breaths of the sweet ether and go to sleep as quickly as he could so they would get through. He was afraid they would begin too soon, but every time he took the deep breaths the sponge would be lifted a little, and they would poke away at his eyes and wake him up; he began to feel angry at the idiotic assistant who would not let him go to sleep.

Just then he felt they were doing something to his side,—

John Ganton's Vision

feeling of it,— putting something wet on it. He heard the rattling of the instruments. They were getting ready; he knew it, and he was not asleep. He could hear them, he could feel what they were doing, and they would cut into him while he was awake and kill him. His old terrors overwhelmed him, he tried to move, to struggle, to cry out, but there was only a hoarse guttural sound which did not seem to come from him, but from far away, and the sponge came down over his mouth and nose, this time a little closer and firmer

He knew they were feeling of his side, poking and working at him,— all of a sudden there was a sensation down there as if they had drawn the sharp point of a needle across his skin, or — no, it was more like the edge of a piece of ice, it was cold. What could they be doing now?

After this first sensation he could feel nothing more, only that they seemed to be fussing about his side, pulling it and poking it so it ached a little, then working it with — why did they not put him to sleep and go ahead with the operation? He was getting tired, so weary, he would just go to sleep anyway, ether or no ether, they could do as they pleased, he no longer cared. For some time the young assistant had not poked his eyes; for some time the big sponge had rested on his nose and mouth, it felt so cool and good, they were so interested in his side they must have forgotten all about him, and now he would go to sleep; he would have a good rest in spite of them.

And he went to sleep, and he dreamed of the days when he lived on the farm, of those bright, happy days when, a little barefooted boy in patched and faded overalls which

Ganton & Co.

came to his armpits, he drove the cows to pasture and loitered by the brook in the far meadow, or dangled his brown and dirty legs from the rude bridge of tamarack logs; he dreamed of the crane which stood like a sentinel by the water's edge, of the brilliant dragon-flies he often tried to catch, of the big shiners which darted hither and thither through the rippling waters; he could hear the hoarse croaking of the frogs at night, the shrill sound of the grasshoppers in the fields, the song of the distant whip-poor-will,— whip-poor-will.

He dreamed of his rough but kindly father, who rose with the sun and worked all day long until after dark to earn enough to support his family, — the father who one day went to bed in the bedroom downstairs, and after a few days died; he could just remember how still the house was, how dark they kept the room, the green shutters open just a little for air, and how strange and white and rigid his father looked in the long black box in the centre of the room. He had never seen his father lie like that, in his Sunday coat and waistcoat, with a big collar and white tie; he stole in alone and put the tips of his fingers on the white, the awfully white forehead, but it was so cold and damp he shrank back terrified. Then came the funeral, the neighbors with their buggies and teams hitched to the fence along the road, the old white-haired minister from the village, the dusty ride to the burying-ground, a mound of earth, a few faded flowers, — and that was all.

He dreamed of his two sisters who had died years and years ago; and he dreamed of his mother, of a thin figure in black who hugged him close to her and cried over him, who seemed to suffer so much. He remembered how she got thinner and thinner, until the village doctor told her she

John Ganton's Vision

must go to the hospital in the neighboring city and have something done,— he never knew what. But they took him to see her in the hospital one day, where she lay so still on the narrow iron bed; somehow it seemed to him like the village jail. She held his little brown hand in both of hers and kissed him again and again, and cried when they took him away. He never saw her again, not even in her coffin, for they did not open it when they brought her back to the village to be buried beside his father,— the same neighbors with their horses hitched to the fence, the same white-haired minister from the village, the same burying-ground, an open grave, a few flowers,— and that was all. . . .

But he dreamed stranger dreams than these: he dreamed the flowers that seemed withered and dead sprang to life and lifted up their heads in fragrance, that the graves opened and those he loved came forth in dim, mysterious shapes, that they hovered about him, stretched out their hands toward him, beckoned him to join them; and in the far distance he saw a city, the houses of which were of gold and the palaces of clear crystal,— it was the city his mother described so often in those days when she taught him to pray,— that beautiful city of light; there it was in all its fair reality just as she had said; so he mounted the broad, white stairway, each step a filmy cloud, and he came to the gates of pearl, and he dreamed that before they closed behind him he looked back on the earth beneath, but it was hidden and lost in darkness, shrouded in smoke and bathed in steam and noisome vapors,— a place of slaughter and offal.

CHAPTER XXV

THE END AND THE BEGINNING

THREE days before young John Ganton arrived in Chicago his father was buried in Graceland. In accordance with a wish expressed long before, they hollowed out a great trench and made a pit of concrete, the bottom and sides of which were more than two feet thick. Into this pit they lowered the leaden coffin and sealed the top with a slab of granite which only derricks could move. There John Ganton, founder, creator, and head of Ganton & Co., was laid to rest, to moulder and with the years decay; but protected from contact with the all-dissolving earth. Generations hence his body will remain intact.

The day after John arrived they opened the will; it was a short, business-like document, executed recently. After distributing a number of bequests to institutions which he favored and to certain of the men who had worked for him many years, and after making ample provision for his wife, he left one million dollars in trust for Will, the income and principal to be paid over upon his marriage, with the proviso, however, if he married a daughter of James Q. Keating, "commonly known as 'Jem Keating'" — so the will put it — "the bequest should be null and void, and the fund so held in trust should be distributed pro rata among the several institutions hereinbefore named in clause three."

The entire rest and residue of the estate, in whatsoever it

The End and the Beginning

might consist, was left to John Ganton, Jr., with the special request that he "devote his life and energies to the service of Ganton & Co."

They were assembled in the library, Mrs. Ganton, Will, and John, their father's attorney, and Browning, who had been invited to be present.

When the clause concerning him was read, Will Ganton's face flushed, and he hung his head as if to suppress an exclamation of anger. He did not care about the money; in all Chicago there was not a fellow who cared so little about money; but it cut him to the quick to hear May Keating referred to in such brutal terms,—referred to as plainly as if her name had been mentioned. A bitter feeling against his father filled his heart. Up to that moment he had mourned more than John, for his father had been nearer to him than to his brother. In his clumsy way he had tried to cheer his mother and sustain her under the awful shock of sudden death; like a great dog, he had hung about the house, sitting by her side, and comforting her in mute sympathy. He had missed his father almost as much as she had, but now as he listened to the monotonous accents of the lawyer reading the clause which cut him off entirely if he married a daughter of "Jem Keating," his sorrow gave way to a feeling of bitter resentment. He was glad John was to have charge of the business,—that provision relieved him of a lot of responsibility and worry. He glanced at John to see how he took it, but the latter's firm, smooth face betrayed not the slightest emotion. He sat there looking at the attorney, and listening as if his thoughts were elsewhere.

While the clause regarding Will was being read, John

Ganton & Co.

Ganton looked from the attorney to his brother in amazement. Beyond a few hints contained in his mother's letters, he knew nothing of what had been going on in Chicago, nothing of Will's quarrel with their father. When away he seldom read the Chicago papers, and never the society columns, and he had no friends to keep him informed. Hence his surprise as he heard how Will was cut off unless he married, and cut off absolutely if he married May Keating. The harsh injustice of his father's resentment struck him forcibly, and he thought to himself, "I will make good that wrong."

That he should be named as the future head of Ganton & Co. did not surprise him at all, and this lack of surprise came to him afterward as strange.

He knew he was powerless to evade the responsibility. The "request" from the grave was merely the expression of an overwhelming necessity.

When the reading of the will came to an end there was silence for several minutes. The thin, keen-faced lawyer looked from one to the other of the brothers curiously. It was all quite beyond the comprehension of the mother, who sat there in the deepest mourning, huddled in one of the big arm-chairs. All she understood was the reference to the Keating girls and their father, and she felt sorry for Will when she heard that. But all those long words about trusts and trustees, and devises and bequests, with one provision after another, she could make nothing of, so she said nothing. It would all come right in the end,—of that she was certain. She kept thinking how lonely the big house seemed, and wondering what she should do now her husband was gone.

Will was sitting bent forward with his elbows on his

The End and the Beginning

knees, his chin resting in both his hands; he had raised his eyes from the carpet only since the reading of the clause which so affected him.

The silence had become oppressive, when suddenly John Ganton roused himself as if from a fit of abstraction and asked:

"Is that all?"

The lawyer bowed his head, "There is nothing more, Mr. Ganton."

"Do I understand that with the exception of certain bequests, the provision for my mother, and the trust fund of a million dollars for the benefit of my brother, my father has left his entire estate to me to do with as I please?"

"That is correct; you are the principal and at the same time the residuary legatee. There are no restrictions."

"Then, Will," he exclaimed in clear, measured tones, as he rose and went where his brother was sitting, "we can right the wrong which has been done you. If father had lived he would have relented, and happily for us both there is nothing to prevent my doing what is right between you and me."

Will Ganton got up impulsively, grabbed his brother's outstretched hand in both his own, and shook it vigorously as he tried to speak; the conflicting emotions were too much for him for several seconds, but at length, half choking, he said:

"It's all right, John; you mean all right. You're just the same good-hearted, generous fellow you were as a little shaver. I knew you would say it. I was just waiting for you to speak up, just to see if you had changed any. You are all right," he repeated affectionately, "you — you're

Ganton & Co.

all right;" and that was all he could say, but he threw his arms about his brother's neck and hugged him as if he were a child.

When John Ganton, Jr., entered the office of Ganton & Co., in La Salle Street, every employee in the great outer room looked up and recognized him, though hardly more than a dozen had ever seen him before.

He looked like his father, though he was not so tall, not so burly, his face was thinner, his eyes were softer, rounder, and bluer, but there was no mistaking the resemblance; even the office-boy at the door noticed it; the jaws were square and firm. As the keen salesman in New York had remarked, there was a "bulldoggy" expression which reminded them of the father. "A chip of the old block," "Looks like him," "Better temper, I should say," "Not so quick to fly off the handle," "Rather like his looks," "He 'll do," were some of the comments which spread from desk to desk as he passed through to Browning's desk and with him into the private office.

"You will find everything just as your father left it, Mr. Ganton." It seemed funny to call him "Mr. Ganton." Browning had always called both the boys by their first names since they were little fellows. "Nothing has been disturbed," he continued. "You have the key to the desk, I believe."

John did not reply, but looked about him with a strange feeling. So that was where his father had lived and worked so many years, at that desk, seated in that big revolving chair. For the second it seemed as if he were in the room, as if an unseen presence hovered near them, as if his spirit

The End and the Beginning

lingered wistfully, loath to relinquish control of the great business.

The young man was silent so long that Browning began to feel a little uneasy. At last he said with some hesitation:

"There are a good many telegrams, shall I bring them in?"

"Not just yet. I will send for you shortly."

As Browning went out he closed the door after him.

John Ganton went to the window and looked out upon the street and at the sign of the competitor on the windows opposite, just as his father had been in the habit of doing a dozen times a day. One of the men in the office of the company across the street, looking over, exclaimed in surprise:

By the great Jehosaphat! Look there, if that is n't old John Ganton come to life, only he has renewed his youth."

"Must be young John," some one remarked; "they said he might be down to-day."

"Well, if he is n't the old man over again, I miss my guess," the first speaker responded emphatically.

John turned from the window, took a small flat key from his pocket, unlocked the desk, and pushed back the big roll top.

Everything was just as his father had left it the last time he was down, the day he had signed and acknowledged his will. The pen with its big hard-rubber holder lay across the sheet of blue blotting-paper where he had dropped it; there was a big blot at the point where the ink had run off and been absorbed. The small desk clock enclosed in a sphere of glass had run down days before, and the hands stood at thirteen minutes of six. John found himself won-

Ganton & Co.

dering whether the clock had stopped in the morning or the afternoon. He would wind it and set it by-and-bye. .

There were a number of telegrams and letters pushed to one side, as if his father had been too sick or too occupied with other matters to attend to them; they were all of a business nature, some important, others unimportant. No doubt most of them had answered themselves, as many telegrams and most letters will if lost or overlooked; he would turn them all over to Browning.

At the left hand he noticed a file of papers carefully gathered together and held by a steel spring clasp. To his surprise he found they were his cablegrams, letters, and reports, from the first wireless message about the Austrian meat inspection order to the last memorandum he had sent regarding business at the Liverpool office,—all arranged in chronological order. What were they doing on his father's desk? He could not imagine. There they were just as if his father had been looking them over the last time he was down. That such was the fact he afterward learned from Browning, for his father had sent for the file about an hour before he signed his will.

John Ganton looked over his own reports and correspondence with the interest of a man who is reminded of a series of transactions long forgotten; he had his father's faculty of deciding instantly, acting quickly, and dismissing a matter from his mind completely; he did not burden his memory with the debris of past transactions.

When he read that first wireless message, sent months before, he recalled the beautiful summer day, the great ship, its deckload of smiling and chatting passengers, the smoking-room, the pompous ambassador. He could hear the

The End and the Beginning

hoarse buzz of the wireless instruments as the operator communicated with the distant shore; he could see Mrs. Townsend lounging indolently in her chair,— all, it all came back to him like a vision from another world, another life, for what had that world and that life in common with the world and life before him?

It seemed so long ago.

With something like a sigh he straightened up, threw his shoulders back as if bracing himself for a burden, and sent for Browning to bring the letters and telegrams.

THE END

